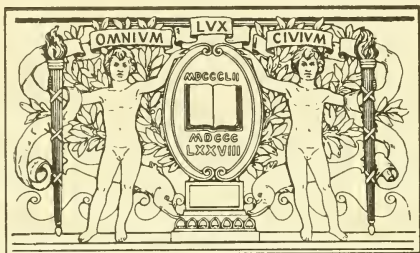


JUNE

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❖ JUNE ❖



Page 7

"I MUST SAY I WAS A LITTLE MITE SURPRISED TO FIND
YOU WAY UP HERE ON THE MOUNTAIN"

JUNE

By

Edith Barnard Delano

With Illustrations



Boston and New York
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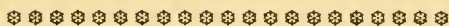
TO
RUTH, HELEN
AND UNCLE JACK

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JUNE



CHAPTER I

THE GREEN PARASOL

SCRAPE! Grab! Tumble! Scrape again, and thump! Then Hilary Warburton lay still, while the sun moved serenely toward its western cradle. He lay so still that even the squirrels lost interest in him, and the shadows were long across the valley when at last he opened his eyes to behold — a bright green parasol!

He was sure he was dreaming or delirious; people do not usually go climbing over strange mountains trying to find their way by compass and sun and such rude maps as may be had, and then fall stupidly over unexpected cliffs, to open their eyes upon little green parasols. So Hilary lay for a while looking

at it; it was open, small and quaint, of the brilliant shade known to our grandmothers as apple-green, and it had a long handle of something that looked like ivory. It could not be carved ivory, of course; that must be part of his delirium; if bright green parasols did indeed grow, like strange mushrooms, in the woods of Virginia, they certainly would not grow with carved ivory handles.

Hilary blinked at the parasol, and looked about him; there was not much to be seen except leaves, the very steep hillside above him which still showed, by its torn bushes, where he had fallen, and a bit of the valley that lay below the mountain. Far down in the valley he could see, by peering through the tree-tops, a stately old house; but it seemed to be deserted, for one corner of its roof was plainly fallen in, and the ground about it was uncultivated. He tried to recall the hours just passed, and remembered that he had started to cross into this valley in the morning, when the sun was facing him, while

now it was at his back; he had known that it was a foolish thing to do, to leave the little village hotel in Ferryville without telling any one where he was going; anything might happen to a man alone in those woods. But it was not his way to think of precautions until it was too late to act upon them; and this time he had wanted to gain all the time he could. It was no small thing for a young engineer to be sent alone by a big railroad to find out the truth as to the rumor that had reached the company of great mineral wealth in these hills. Hilary knew very well that if the Chief Engineer had not been busy elsewhere, he would never have got this chance; as it was, he had meant to do his work quickly and thoroughly, and make his report in the shortest possible time.

All this passed through his mind as he lay there; and with these thoughts he realized that he could not possibly be delirious, and that the ridiculous green parasol almost within his reach must be real, and not part

of a dream. He reached out towards the carved handle, and could not quite touch it; so he started to his feet, took one step, and fainted!

When next he awoke it was to something far more startling, even, than a green parasol. Before he opened his eyes he was aware of soft hands on his hair, and of a sweet voice murmuring unfamiliar exclamations. Then, to his infinite surprise, something still softer touched his lips.

He opened his eyes, and looked directly up into a face bending above his own, a slender, childish face framed in dark curling hair, a face of flushed cheeks and wide-opened eyes, and lips parted in smiling expectancy. As he looked, the face dimpled in laughter, and the owner of it sat back upon the grass.

"Oh, bress de lan'! Oh, bress de lan'!" she cried, and clapped her hands. "Oh, glory, glory halleluya! I knew that would wake you up, I jes' knew it!" Then, as he was far too amazed to speak, she added with a

knowing little nod, "It always does, you know!"

Hilary looked at her helplessly. It was evident that he was still delirious, after all! He wondered when he would be strong enough to get down that mountain-side; but little girls who appeared in dreams evidently expected answers, so he said, weakly, —

"Oh, does it?"

She nodded vigorously. "Uh-huh. It always does wake 'em up, you know, in the fairy tales!"

It occurred to Hilary that perhaps she was the person in a dream, and not he. "Oh," he asked, "then you don't go around doing that all the time?"

"Laws sakes! No!" she exclaimed, her eyes wide in astonishment at such an evidently foolish question. "I don't get the chance to!"

In spite of his bewilderment, Hilary laughed. "Oh, so that's why you don't, is it? You don't get the chance to?" he repeated.

The little girl shook her head, and her voice sank to a confidential tone. "No, suh," she said regretfully. "No, suh. You'd scarcely believe it, I suppose, but you are the very first prince I ever saw in all my whole long life!"

This time Mr. Warburton sat up, and stared at her. "The first *what?*" he asked.

"Prince," she repeated calmly. "Oh, I knew you'd come," she went on hurriedly, as if trying to reassure him. "Of co'se I knew you'd come, *some* time; but I—I was n't ezac'ly expectin' you to-day. I came back to look fo' my parasol, 'cause it was my Aunt Lucille Mary's, an' Mammy don't let me take it out when she knows it, you see; and when I found the parasol, why, there you were, sound asleep, jes' like they always are! I cert'n'y was surprised; but it was a lucky thing I remembered what to do, was n't it? You might 'a' slept fo' a hundred years!"

Mr. Warburton's lips were twitching, but he managed to ask politely, "I hope my

unexpected arrival did not inconvenience you?"

"Laws, no!" she reassured him. "I was real glad to see you! I always knew you'd come; but I must say I was a little mite surprised to find you way up here on the mountain!"

It was the most natural thing in the world to fall into the humor of her talk. "Pleasant surprise?" he asked.

"Oh, very," she politely assured him; and added:—

"And now, if you don't mind, we'll jes' go right down and be married and live happy ever after, and you may give me a be-e-eauti-ful wedding gown of satin and lace — oh, and emeralds, because green is my favorite color, though I never saw a really truly emerald in all my whole long life!"

For a moment after she stopped speaking, Hilary looked at her; then he began to laugh, sending out peal after peal; he laughed until his sides ached, until because of his very weakness he could laugh no more.

When at last he looked at the little girl, her face was turned aside; but he could see that her eyes were brimming with tears, and that her teeth were pressed upon her pretty, trembling lower lip. His face flushed with shame, and he did not know what to say; so he leaned forward, and mutely held out his hand. But she shook her head, and presently said, in a voice choked with tears:—

“I—I reckon you are n’t a really truly prince, after all; ’cause I don’t think a really prince would—” She paused and rubbed her eyes with the back of a hand which, he noticed, was somewhat grimy.

Then Mr. Warburton told her, quite plainly and simply, how he was, indeed, no manner of prince, but only a poor young engineer who had been sent, a scout of peace, to reconnoiter in these hills for minerals; he told her how he had fallen down almost upon her green parasol, and how, if he had not injured his foot, he would probably be far on his way by now and might never have seen

her. Then she jumped up, with a soft little cry of pity, and clasped her hands.

“Oh, you po’ child!” she exclaimed quaintly. “For de land’s sake! Why ’n’t you tell me you were hurted? You must come right down to my house; I’ll go get Unc’ Tribby an’ the boys to tote you down!”

She was darting off through the woods when Hilary called her back. “Wait, wait,” he cried. Then, “My dear little girl,” he said, when she had come reluctantly back, “even if I were really the prince you took me for, I could not possibly let you do that. You don’t know a thing about me!”

She looked down at him with her head on one side. “Why, you’ve just told me, have n’t you?” she asked.

Hilary smiled. “I have told you, yes; but I mean — well, I mean I really need more recommendations than my own word before your father and mother are likely to welcome me.”

She sat down on the grass in front of him,

and clasped her arms about her knees. She looked at him with more curiosity than she had yet shown, and, with her head on one side, asked, "I reckon you have n't seen very much o' the world, have you?"

To this surprising query Mr. Warburton could only murmur, weakly, "Why?"

"'Cause if you had, you sho'ly would know who that valley down there belongs to! 'Most anybody who had traveled at all would know that much, I should think!"

It occurred to Hilary that she had an unusual method of arriving at conclusions. "Well," he said, "I suppose I am very ignorant; but as a matter of fact I have n't the least little bit of an idea in the world who this valley belongs to!"

"Me!" she told him, nodding vigorously to drive the information home. "Why, even the folks over in Ferryville know that much! And I have n't any father nor any mother, nor any brothers nor sisters, nor aunts nor uncles, nor grandmothers! Though," she

added, "I did use to have one of those! I have n't anybody at all except Mammy and Unc' Tribby and the boys and the chillen. So you see my father and mother could n't very well want to know you any better, could they?"

Mr. Warburton had to admit that they could not. "Well, no," he said; "but surely you do not live here alone?"

"Ain't I jest told you?" she cried, in evident exasperation at his slow comprehension. "It's my house, what you can see the roof of down there."

It seemed to Hilary the strangest thing he had ever heard. "Would you mind telling me your name?" he asked, hoping to get some clue to the mystery. "Mine is Hilary Warburton."

She repeated it after him. "Hilary Hilary-Hilary. I like that. I like it better than mine. Mine's Juliet, but I won't answer unless'n you call me June. Oh — and it's Lansing, of course. We are all Lansings down at

Oakwood Manor," she added, with a quaint and proud little tip of her chin.

"Lansing! Oakwood Manor!" he repeated. The words seemed familiar to him; he must have heard them before.

But while he was pondering upon them, the little girl was off again, and called back through the trees, —

"I'm goin' to get Unc' Tribby and the boys to tote you down!"

Hilary was far too puzzled and amazed to call her back. What manner of child could this be, who claimed to own the entire valley and a very large old house, who had no relations, but lived with people she called "Unc' Tribby and Mammy and the boys and the chillen"? Who on earth were the boys and the children? It all seemed as strange as the little green parasol on the side of a mountain!

And her name — Juliet Lansing — surely he had heard that name before! But where? He racked his brains, and could not remember. Juliet — June — how well the odd nick-

name suited the odd child! For what was there about her that was not unusual?

He had noticed that her dress was peculiar, but being a man he did not know why; a woman would have said at a glance that it was made of very old-fashioned silk, in a style equally old-fashioned. He had noticed, too, that she wore, hung about her neck by a string of what seemed to be pearls, a large and curious cross; if she had not declared that she had never seen a "really truly emerald" in all her "whole long life," Warburton would have said that the cross was a very magnificent one of emeralds. Then, too, her speech — the queerest mixture of negro grammar and phrases, and yet filled with the instinctive politeness of a lady!

He must have been thinking over these things longer than he would have supposed, for it seemed only a short while before he heard voices coming up the hill, and in a few minutes the little girl appeared, and with her were three negro men. Two were young and

stalwart, the third very old and bent, with his gray kinky hair done up in tight little pigtails. The two younger men carried a shutter which must have been in need of paint for many years.

"Now, Unc' Tribby," the child said, when they had come up to Warburton, sitting helpless and amused and puzzled in the grass, "I hope you'll believe me now! Would you call that a tromp?" She pointed to Hilary, and he laughed.

The old negro had taken off his hat and was bowing with funny little bobs; the other two stood grinning awkwardly.

"No, Miss, honey, dat ain't no tromp! I axes yo' pardon, suh, but I jes' could n't make out de rights ob it w'en Miss June come 'long down dar wid a resh an' a swish an' tol' us a gen'le'um was hurted up hyar on de mounting!"

"You were quite right to doubt, Uncle Tribby," Warburton replied. "I would n't have believed it myself!"

Uncle Tribby chuckled, and the "boys" exploded with laughter; it was evident that they had been longing to express their feelings. Only June remained grave.

"Unc' Tribby," she said severely, "every time you jine the church over again, you take to doubtin' whatever I say!"

The old man rubbed his head, and the pig-tails stood more awry than before. "Yas'm," he said. "Yas, Miss June, I reckon dat's so. Seem like mos' times I cain't help believin' in all dem fairies an' spookses an' princes you-all tells about; but w'en I jines de church an' gits religion, seem like I jes' cain't b'lieve in none o' dem things no more!"

"Well," she replied sternly, "I hope this will be a lesson to you. I told you it was a gentleman, and you said it was a tromp! Now, you jes' see for yourself who tells the truth."

Uncle Tribby ducked his head in apology, and turned to Warburton. "Miss June say we-all is to tote you down to de big house,"

he said. "Mammy, she's a-waitin', an' I reckon we mought as well start."

But Hilary had something to say first. "Look here, Uncle," he said, "I want you to tell me something, as man to man. I am pretty badly hurt, and I don't know what on earth I should have done if your young lady had not found me; I shall be more than glad and grateful if you will take me down to where I can send for a doctor, for my foot seems to be broken; but, Uncle, is it all right for me to accept your young lady's hospitality?"

It had been many long years since the old negro had been spoken to in such a manner, and his back straightened and a gentle dignity crept into his face. He looked quietly and searchingly into Hilary's eyes for a moment, and then he said, —

"Yas, suh. I reckon it's all right."

"Thank you," said Hilary quietly, and directed the men how to lift him.

CHAPTER II

OAKWOOD MANOR

AFTER several days and nights of pain, when even to think seemed too much of an effort, Hilary Warburton awoke one morning with the southern sun streaming across his bed, and at last a comparative freedom from the agony in his back and injured foot. Through all the suffering he had been aware of a kind, brown face, crowned with a plaid kerchief, bending above him, and of a man who came at intervals and made his foot hurt even worse. Now he remembered that he had lost all consciousness on the way down the mountain, for when the men lifted him it was found that not only was Hilary's foot broken, but also that he had badly strained his back in his tumble down the mountain-side.

The room in which he lay had evidently, in days gone by, been very handsomely fur-

nished; even now, what remained of the furniture was beautiful, and his bed had tall carved posts and a white canopy. He remembered that this must be the home of the amusing child who had taken him for a fairy prince. She lived here alone with the negro servants — how strange that was! What was it that her name suggested — Juliet Lansing?

He did not have long to puzzle over it, however, for he had not been awake half an hour when something red came flying through the window, and hit him fairly on the nose!

“Oh, I ax your pardon,” said June’s laughing voice. He turned his head, and saw her face, with its dark hair and eyes, just peeping above the window sill. “I ax your pardon, Mr. Hilary Hilary-Hilary — I’ve forgotten the rest! I jest thought I’d see if you were awake, you know, and I sho’ly did n’t mean to hit you in the nose with that flower!”

“Is it another of your ways of waking princes?” Hilary asked.

June drew herself up to the window sill, and perched there with her arms about her knees. "Mammy won't let me come in by the door," she said, "and I would n't dare sit here if she was n't down in the kitchen. Is n't she funny? Sometimes I don't think I rightly understand Mammy! I told her you b'longed to me 'cause I found you, and she jest said that did n't make a mite o' difference! Well, I don't mind climbing! That's one good thing!"

"Climbing?" Hilary exclaimed. "Did you really climb up there? How?"

June nodded. "Uh-huh. Grape arbor. I have eleven more days of it, glory, glory halleluya!"

Mr. Warburton laughed again; he remembered that she had her own peculiar ways of arriving at conclusions. "Eleven more days of grape arbors? What on earth do you mean?"

She stared at him a moment in disapproval; evidently she did not enjoy being

laughed at. Then she told him seriously, "Eleven more days of climbing, of course. Ladies don't climb any more after they get in their teens. Aunt Lucille Mary did n't, and I s'ppose Grandmamma did n't, though Mammy cain't ezac'ly recomember when Grandmamma was a little girl. I am going to be in my teens in eleven more days, and — oh, dear, I do so wish I did n't have to!"

"Why?" Hilary laughed. "Most of us get there sooner or later!"

"Oh, I know," June admitted. "But Mammy says I must begin to be a young lady, and wear long skirts, and hats, and keep my hands clean, and put away my fairy-book, when I'm thirteen. I'd have to learn to tat, too, if there was anybody to teach me. Aunt Lucille Mary made miles and miles of tatting; but I know I'd hate to tat worse than anything in all the whole wide world!"

June looked doleful at the thought of it, and Warburton laughed aloud. "I think it would be rather disagreeable," he said. "It

sounds so!" Then he asked — for he felt that he must really learn something more about this child who was so strangely situated, —

"Who taught you to read in your fairy-book?"

"Grandmamma," she replied.

"Do you remember your grandmamma, then?"

June looked at him wonderingly. "Of course I do!" she replied. "Don't you remember yours?"

"Oh, yes," Hilary told her; "I remember mine, for I saw her a week or so ago. And I remember my father and mother, too."

June's face grew serious. "I don't really believe I ever had any father and mother," she declared. "Grandmamma never would tell me anything about them, and Mammy jest says, 'Hesh, chil'!' when I ask her; and I have n't the very least little faintest remembrance of them. I don't believe I ever had any."

For a moment Warburton did not know what further question to ask; then he noticed that she still wore the cross with the large green stones. "Then that cross you wear did not belong to your mother?" he asked.

June lifted the cross, and turned it over in her hand. "I don't know," she replied. "Grandmamma told me I must keep it always and never let anybody take it away from me, and she said I was to tell anybody, if they asked me for it, that it was made of green glass! I do so wish it was really and truly emeralds!"

"Would you mind letting me see it?" Mr. Warburton asked.

She did not hesitate, but pulled the pearl string over her curls, reached across the narrow space between the window and the bed, and laid the cross in his hand. He made up his mind at once that the stones were real; the pearls on the string were small and partly discolored, but the emeralds were superb—a fortune's worth of jewels, and this child was

wearing it while climbing grape arbors and exploring mountain-sides! He turned it over, and made out faint initials on the pale yellow of the back: "J. P. 1807."

"So your grandmother taught you to read! I suppose she taught you a great many other things, too," Hilary suggested, rather at a loss for something to say.

June put her head on one side and considered. "Well, there was n't very much else to teach!" she announced.

Hilary smiled. "And when she died, all this valley belonged to you, did it?" he asked.

"Uh-huh," replied June. Then she turned towards him and asked, "Where's your valley?"

"My valley?" Hilary repeated, in astonishment. "Why, my dear little girl, I have n't any valley!"

June looked surprised and incredulous. "I thought most people owned valleys! But maybe yours is a mountain?"

"No," laughed Hilary, "I don't own any

land at all. I suppose you don't happen to know it, but it is rather unusual for a little girl to own a whole valley and a mountain or two!"

"Oh, well," she said, "it does n't bother me very much! Unc' Tribby knows what to plant, and the boys do the work, and after a while the chillen will help; so I don't have to think about it very much. And of course there's Mr. Hilt — only he hardly ever comes — which is a blessing."

"Tell me about the children and Mr. Hilt," he suggested.

"Gracious!" June exclaimed; "I should think you'd know that much! The chillen are Torm's chillen, and Torm b'longs to Mammy and Unc' Tribby. Torm's name is Thomas Apostle Lansing, and Unc' Tribby's is Through Great Tribulation We Come to the Lord Lansing, but Mammy says she could n't ve'y well holler all that at him, so she jes' calls him Tribby, which is ever so much easier to say."

“Yes, I certainly think it is,” Hilary laughed. “And who is Mr. Hilt?”

“Mercy! Don’t you know him, either?” she asked. “Why, he lives over in Ferryville, and he’s a lawyer. He came over to see us when Grandmamma died, and he’s been twice since then. I don’t like him very much myself — and I don’t think Mammy does, either. She always sits for a long time with her ap’on over her haid when he goes away, and she won’t sing any at all the whole day, but says a lot of prayers, and cries.”

Hilary could not help smiling at the way she copied the pronunciation of the negroes in the words they commonly used, but he was becoming more and more sure that there was something mysterious and perhaps wrong about this unusual child and her big house and her valley. Why was she alone, with only these faithful negroes? Where were her kinsfolk, or her proper guardians? It was horrible to think of her growing up here alone, untaught and unprotected, lonely, and in

absolute ignorance of the things that should, very evidently, be hers by right of birth. He was beginning to feel that some guiding Providence must have tumbled him down the mountain upon her green parasol; for surely this little maid sadly needed a rescuing prince. While he was wondering over the strangeness of it all, June leaned towards him from her window sill and whispered:—

“Here comes Doctor Manly! I’ll have to go to meet him, Hilary-Hilary, but I’ll come up again by and by! Don’t let on to Mammy that I was here!”

So saying, she dropped from his sight, but he heard her calling to some one on the drive before the house, “Hello, Doctor, honey! Hello, honey, Doctor!”

The doctor was a young man, too energetic and intelligent to remain long in Ferryville, Hilary thought, as he watched him skillfully tending the injured foot.

“Well,” he said, when he had finished his bandaging, “we shall have you hobbling

away in another week! Crutches, of course. Anything I can do for you now?"

"Did I ask you to send a telegram for me, a day or two ago?" Warburton asked.

The doctor nodded. "Yes; and I received a long-distance message on the strength of it, from the Chief Engineer's office, and another man ought to be down here to-day. I suppose you will want to see him?"

"Yes," replied Hilary; "but there is something more that I should like to ask you." The doctor drew a chair up to the bedside, and sat down. "Doctor," Mr. Warburton went on, "I find myself in a very unusual place."

"Oakwood Manor?" the doctor asked.

Hilary nodded, and the two men looked at each other for a moment, as if measuring their good intentions.

"It is more than unusual," the doctor said. "It is an outrage and a shame, but I don't see any way out of it."

"Please tell me what you can, Doctor

Manly," Mr. Warburton said earnestly. "The child seems to be absolutely alone: there is something wrong, I am sure."

Again the doctor nodded. "Wrong, dead wrong, and about as strange a thing as I ever heard of. Do you know anything about it?"

"Only what the child herself has told me."

"Well, there is a lawyer in Ferryville, Hilt, who is the trustee of the whole estate, by the grandfather's will, made forty years ago. The old lady was bedridden for years, ever after word came of her son's death; the baby was sent here to her, and brought up by the old colored woman. After Mrs. Lansing died, Hilt was left sole trustee — and that's all!"

"It can't be all!" Hilary protested. "What sort of a man is Hilt, that he leaves this child here?"

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. "Well, the less said about him the better, since there is nothing good to be said. I suppose at the time old Mr. Lansing made his will, Hilt was

a prosperous, rising young lawyer; Mrs. Lansing was a delicate woman, and I have no doubt her husband thought it best to leave another trustee besides herself, for there were two children — Miss Lucille, who never married, and June's father. But now — well, Hilt is a miserable wreck of a creature, who spends most of his time in the village tavern."

"Have you never said anything to him about the child?" Hilary asked.

The doctor laughed rather grimly. "Oh, yes, I ventured so far! The tipsy old scamp drew himself up, and put his hand on his chest, and replied that he was capable of taking care of his clients' affairs!"

"But surely there must be relatives? What about the child's mother? All the Lansings may be dead, but surely there is some one on the mother's side?"

"Oh, the marriage seems to have been one of those unpopular ones," the doctor replied. "Old Mrs. Lansing disowned the son, who was lost at sea, — he was in the navy, I be-

lieve, — and the poor young wife, who had followed him to China and died very soon after her husband, had broken with her people when she married Lansing; so there you are!”

Something about these facts seemed vaguely familiar to Hilary. “What was the wife’s name?” he asked. “Have you ever heard?”

“I asked young Torm about it, one day, but he knew nothing; and the older negroes will not talk. But some one in the village told me that the young wife’s name was Juliet Percy, or Percival, or something of that sort.”

“By Jove!” Hilary exclaimed, and with a struggle sat up in bed.

“Here! What are you doing?” the doctor protested. “You must not move, you know! What’s the matter?”

“By Heavens, man, I know the whole thing!” exclaimed Hilary. “Juliet Percival! Well, of all strange things! What a duffer I was not to remember!”

The doctor began to look excited. "Know all about it? The dickens you do!" he cried.

"Juliet Percival! Why, I am a sort of a cousin of hers myself! That is, my cousin married her cousin, and her cousin —"

"Oh, I say!" the doctor exclaimed, laughing.

Hilary lay back and laughed, too. "It is the truth, absurd as it sounds," he declared. "My cousin Pauline married Francis Percival, and I have often heard my grandmother, who knew the Percival family well, tell of beautiful Juliet's runaway marriage. There never seemed any sufficient reason for her cutting herself off from her family as she did. She was brought up by her cousin Francis's people, for she was an orphan; and I think it was because they wished her to remain at home with them, instead of following her husband around the world, that she broke with them. I am a good deal younger than the others, and I cannot remember any of the facts for myself, and I may have got them

mixed. But this I do know: her cousin Frank and my cousin Pauline, his wife, would have given anything on earth to find her after Lansing's death, which the newspapers were full of at the time. I am sure they did not know there was a child — poor little June!”

They were both silent for a while, and then the doctor said, “That was a pretty lucky stumble of yours for poor little June, Mr. Warburton!”

“It was, indeed,” Hilary agreed. “Ever since I heard her name, I have been searching around in my memory, but I could not get hold of anything until I heard her mother's. Poor beautiful Juliet Percival! Good Heavens! What an outrage that her baby should have been left alone in the world like this! I shall write Frank at once — he has a house full of youngsters of his own, and I am pretty sure that he will take little Juliet.”

“What about the old colored woman here, and Hilt?” the doctor reminded him.

“Hilt may go to the deuce, and I'll help

send him there in every way I can," replied Hilary.

"So will I, with all my heart," declared the doctor. "And here's Mammy now — tell her."

Mr. Warburton looked at the kindly, gentle old face that had bent above him so often in the days of suffering he had just come through; for a moment he scarcely knew how to tell her the discovery he had made; then he realized that to so faithful a heart, anything for her baby's good would be welcome. She was bringing him a bowl of broth — he guessed that one of Torm's chickens had been sacrificed for him.

"Mammy," he said, turning towards her, "do you remember Miss Juliet Percival?"

For an instant the old woman stood as if turned to stone; then, with a crash, the plate and bowl fell from her hands to the floor. Her face began to work, but she evidently could not speak. The doctor stood up and watched her closely.

“Mammy,” said Hilary again, in the gentlest tone he could use, and putting one hand out towards her, — “Mammy, I am distantly related to the one who was Juliet Percival, Mrs. Juliet Lansing. My Cousin Frank, who loved her as his own sister, would give anything in the world to know this little June of yours.”

For a moment longer Mammy looked at him; then she sank to the floor, put her wrinkled old hands over her streaming eyes, and rocked back and forth, sobbing out: —

“Oh, my lamb, my lamb! Oh, glory, glory halleluya! Oh, my pra’rs is answered! Oh, my little lamb! Somebody done come an’ foun’ you, somebody done come an’ foun’ you! I done de bes’ I could fo’ you, an’ I knowed somebody’d come fo’ you w’en de right time come! Oh, my little lamb, my baby!”

The doctor had walked to the window, and stood with his back to the room; Hilary could feel that tears were running down his own



WITH A CRASH, THE PLATE AND BOWL FELL FROM
HER HANDS TO THE FLOOR

cheeks; the joy of the faithful old woman was the most pathetic thing he had ever seen. They let her cry and rock and give thanks for a while, and then Hilary told her how he had come into the mountains, how little June had found him, what he and the doctor had pieced together of her history, and Mammy nodded at each fact, and put in her exclamations — “Yas, dat’s so!” “Now, ain’t it de truf!” “Glory! Glory!”

So they drew from her all she knew, and when the doctor left, it was to drive at once to Ferryville and send a telegram to Mr. Francis Percival. June’s prince had rescued her.

CHAPTER III

EXPECTATIONS

PAULINE was reading the letter aloud for the fifth time. Each individual member of the family had read it to themselves — except Bob, who never read anything unless he was obliged to, and Anne, who was only a baby. The letter was addressed to Pauline, as the eldest of the family.

“Your Cousin Hilary will be ready to travel next week,” she read, “and I shall return with him. But it was not because of his condition that he sent for me. I want my big little girl and all the chicks to be very glad with me; your Cousin Hilary has discovered some one down here in these Virginia mountains who is going to be very dear to me, because of her dear mother, and who is to be another sister to all of you. You all know the picture on Father’s desk, that

stands opposite Mamma's? You know that was my Cousin Juliet, who was the only sister I ever had; Pauline, at least, must have heard something about her marriage, and how she left us to go away with her husband, angry because we wanted her, for many reasons, to stay at home with us. But what even Polly cannot know is that her husband was drowned off the Chinese coast, in one of the sudden, terrible storms they have there, and that my dear sister, Juliet, followed him very soon, leaving in far-off China a little baby girl. Your Mamma and I did all we could to find our sister, Juliet, when we heard of her husband's death; but we could get no trace of her. We knew nothing of there being a little child. Now, by the oddest of circumstances, your Cousin Hilary has literally fallen upon that little girl, another Juliet, here in Virginia; the wife of a missionary brought her back to her grandmother, who has now been dead several years; and that dear little girl, that your Mamma would have

loved as one of yourselves, has been taken care of here by a family of faithful colored people, the woman having been her father's nurse. There is a vast amount of worthless land here belonging to the child, and I must remain until Hilary and I can arrange with the court to have me made her guardian, in place of the old scamp who is now trustee. Then I shall bring Juliet back with me, and I shall expect my little woman to have things ready for her, and all of you to love her. Kisses all 'round. — FATHER."

Pauline folded the letter, and put it back in its envelope. It had come six days before, and during all that time the Percivals had talked of little else than the new cousin who was so soon to become a member of the family. Now, at five o'clock in the afternoon, their father might come at any moment, for the Southern train was due at half-past four.

During all the discussion of the news there had been varying expressions of approval

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and disapproval. Baby Anne, of course, was too young to realize what was going on; she had lately passed her second birthday, and for just as long as she had been with them, the young Percivals had had to do without the dear mother who left them the day of little Anne's coming. The baby was sitting on the rug at Polly's feet, showing a picture book to a small gray kitten, who persisted in going to sleep. Bob, next older than Anne by eight years, was aiming an empty sling-shot at the clock; Aimée, who was thirteen, was arranging her hair in front of the mirror that hung above the old-fashioned sideboard; and Eugenia had been working out her examples for the morrow, and was resting both elbows on the table, with her geometry propped against a sugar bowl. The children usually sat in the large dining-room which opened out of the parlor, for the parlor seemed rather lonely since their mother left, and the library upstairs was their father's own room.

Bob was the first to speak after Pauline finished the letter. "Don't see why it could n't have been a boy!" he grumbled.

Aimée looked at his reflection in the glass and spoke without turning around. "Maybe she'll let you carry her books to school, little Bobby," she said. "Maybe she'll like your nice curly hair; maybe she'll admire your pretty red cheeks!"

Bob, instantly aroused by the sisterly insults, jumped up with a howl, dashed across towards Aimée, gave a pull at the hair-ribbon which she had been tying with such care, and ran from the room; in a moment they heard the street door slam behind him.

"Oh, Maysie! Aimée!" said Pauline, with a reproachful shake of her head at her sister.

"I don't care," said Aimée. "It's bad enough to have another girl in the family; imagine another boy, Polly!"

Pauline gave an involuntary little sigh; it was, indeed, bad enough to have another

member of the family. Young as she was, the care of the household largely fell upon her, and all too well she knew that the coming of one more would mean that much the less to be divided among them all — and there had been so very little before! Mr. Percival's salary was not large; there were six to be clothed and fed, and no longer a careful mother to make both ends meet; but even before the ends were in sight, there were many calls upon Mr. Percival's sympathy; so that Polly, careful and earnest though she was, never knew just how much she could count upon each month. She was glad to have the little orphaned Juliet, of course she was glad; but, after all, it meant more care, and Polly was only seventeen.

"Well, she's got to room with you, Aimée," Eugenia spoke up; "you are nearest her age, and you've got to look after her. I warn you all right now, I'm not going to have her interrupting my lessons!"

"Oh, girls," cried Polly; "don't talk like

that! How can you, when Father wrote as he did! And she *is* our cousin?"

"Well, cousin or not," declared Aimée, "I'm not going to have her in *my* room, mussing everything. Think how she's been brought up!"

"I have already put her bed in my room," said Pauline, with dignity, "and I don't think she'd need much bringing up, Aimée, to have better manners than some nearer home!"

Aimée made a face in the glass. "Don't put on airs, Polly Percival," she said. "You are only seventeen, if you are the oldest!" From which it may be seen that Pauline's task was not the easiest in the world.

While this welcome was awaiting her, June had been having exciting days. Mr. Warburton had left it to Mammy to explain to her the change in her fortunes, and it was the old woman herself who decided, after she had inspected Mr. Percival and talked with him

about June's future, to let her dear little mistress travel to her new home in his care, unattended by her devoted Mammy.

"Co'se I could leave Tribby wid de boys," she said, "but seem lak my baby ought ter start out widout anybody to mind her o' de Manor, nor hender her learnin'. I knows as well as anybody dat she's got a powe'ful lot to learn, an' I reckon she can do it better widout her Mammy to run to ev'y time any little thing goes wrong-like. 'Co'se she's goin' ter be a little mite lonelysome, jes' at firs'."

But June was too full of excitement to realize what it would mean to leave Mammy behind; they had never been separated since June could remember anything, and it was not unnatural that she should fail to realize what separation would mean. Mr. Percival was greatly amused by her manner of talking, and whenever she was with him or Hilary, her questions gave them all they could do to answer. She had never been

farther than Ferryville, so that when it came to explaining to her the things that his own children would have taken for granted, Mr. Percival was often puzzled.

She was very curious about the new cousins, and especially about Anne. "I never saw a little white baby in all my whole long life," she told him. And when he said that she was to go to school with Eugenia and Aimée, she shook her head and said emphatically:—

"No, I reckon I won't go to school. I don't think I'd like it at all; and besides, I know all there is to learn, except tatting, and I am never, never, never going to learn to tat!"

So Mr. Percival did not insist, knowing that the children at home would find better means of persuading her than any he could use.

Mr. Percival and, later, Hilary Warburton, went daily into Ferryville, and once even so far as the county seat, to put June's affairs in order. When things were explained to the

kindly old Judge, who had known her grandfather, there was no difficulty in displacing Mr. Hilt from his trusteeship, and making Mr. Percival June's guardian; although, as Hilary said, there was very little of value in all her big estate.

"The land would not sell at ten cents an acre," the Judge had told them, sorrowfully. "There are more than four thousand acres, but you could not find a purchaser at any price. The railroad is fourteen miles away, too, even if any one could be found to farm it."

But Mammy had had a word to say to Mr. Percival in secret, on the subject of June's inheritance. "My ol' Miss done tol' me nuvver to tell anybody, but I reckon ef she was here now she'd tell you herse'f." She took out of the folds of her neckerchief the emerald cross with its pearl chain.

Mr. Percival exclaimed when he saw it, and Mammy's old face wrinkled in a sad little smile.

"Dar now! I reckon I ain't got no call to tell you-all nothin' about it," she said. "Ol' Miss said dis yere cross b'longed to Miss June's great-grandma, an' ef de time uvver come w'en I could fin' a way to sen' her to school, she reckoned dis yer would pay for it. But you done seen it befo', ain't you?"

Mr. Percival shook his head. "No," he said, "as it happens I have not, but I know very well what it is. There have been three Juliet Percivals, and this cross was left to my cousin Juliet, the last of them, to be given to her by an old friend of the family when she came of age. She was married before that, and I suppose he must have sent it to her when the time came. Your mistress was quite right; the cross would send Miss June to school, and more; but we will try to get on without using it, Mammy."

"I don't jes' think Miss June ought ter wear it around loose-like in de city," Mammy suggested.

Mr. Percival heartily agreed to that, and

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Mammy gave the jewel into his keeping; so it was not for many a month that June saw her cross again.

Mammy was full of work, in those days; she was making June's outfit with as much speed and skill as she could. Mr. Percival, accustomed though he was to children, could not have passed judgment on a childish garment if his life had depended upon it, and Hilary knew little more. Mammy consulted them both, but Mr. Percival told her that June was very well as she was; and while Hilary had a faint impression that she was not dressed as other children he had seen, he could not tell where the difference lay.

"I don't believe, Mammy," he said, "that little girls in the city wear silk. I really don't believe they do."

Mammy looked at him in scorn. "Huh, I reckon you ain't seen much o' ladies, den," she said. "My ol' Miss al'ays said silk was de onliest kin' o' stuff a lady could wear!"

"Well," Hilary persisted, "I think the

fashions must have changed, Mammy, since your old mistress's time."

But Mammy tossed her turbaned head. "De fashion o' bein' a lady ain't changed none," she replied; and thereafter depended on her own judgment about June's clothes.

There was no lack of material to make them from, for the big attic was full of trunks where family garments had been laid away for three generations. As Mammy had said, they were mostly silks; and of such variety! Dainty, faded pinks and lavenders, blues that looked almost gray with age, and many darker or more vivid in hue — decent browns that had been worn for Sunday bests, gayer plaids for afternoons, and even a yellowed bridal white. Mammy had plenty to choose from. As for patterns, there, too, she followed family tradition. Her Miss Lucille Mary had worn little dresses of a certain cut, and although Miss Lucille Mary had been resting in the family burying-ground back of the house for thirty years or more, Mammy used

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the same muslin pattern by which Miss Lucille Mary's little dresses had been fashioned. So it happened that when June was dressed for departure from the Manor, a queerer little figure could scarcely have been found in any State of the Union.

When the day of the journey arrived, Mammy refused to go to Ferryville to bid her darling good-bye; Mr. Warburton had been helped into the big wagon, Unc' Tribby was perched on the seat, Torm and his brother and the children were standing about in the road, and Mr. Percival was waiting, when June dashed back to her Mammy's arms.

"I won't go without you, Mammy darling, I won't! I jest cain't!" she wailed, hugging her with all her might. But she was lifted into the wagon at last in spite of her wild sobs and her struggles to return to Mammy; and as they passed out of sight of the house Mr. Percival and Hilary looked back, and saw the "boys" and the children waving

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frantically, and the faithful old woman sitting on the broken doorstep, rocking herself back and forth, with her apron over her head.

June's voyage of discovery had begun, and each step of the way was full of wonder for her. First there were the splendors of Ferryville's one dusty street, and the fearful thunder of the train. Then they were whirled swiftly over mountains and through valleys, over bridges that crossed small torpid rivers, past fields of tobacco and corn; and twice they changed trains, with weary waits both times. Finally, late at night, as it seemed to her, June was shown, against the starry sky, a tall, pale lancet of white, — the great Monument, — and in a few minutes a glistening, mysterious dome which she entirely failed to realize was part of a building. At Washington they changed trains again, and June was helped by Mr. Percival, whose fatherly, friendly intentions were very clumsy after Mammy's tenderness, into a queer dark shelf with curtains in front, which she was sure

was the strangest bed in the world. She discovered that she could raise a little curtain at the side, and look out into the night at the trees and dark spaces and patches of paler sky whirling past. She thought she watched them all night, but in the morning she was strangely rested for a person who had not slept! With daylight the world had changed; the train had stopped in a large place of many tracks and many other trains, and Mr. Percival took her hand and helped her down, and they went across a broad and busy river, to a place of buildings so tall and empty-looking that June would have thought herself in a dream, if Hilary-Hilary had not kept telling her about it all. Mr. Percival had some business in New York, and June grew very tired of the noise and crowds; they did not interest, but frightened her, especially when Hilary said good-bye.

He took both her hands in his when he bade them farewell. "Good-bye, little June," he said, smiling into her eyes, that were, by

this time, big with wonder and a little wistful. "You must not forget me. Remember what you said — that I belong to you, because you found me!"

June's lips were trembling ever so little, and she was aware of something quite strange and large in her throat; so she did not say good-bye, but watched him disappear in the crowd.

It was late in the afternoon when they descended from the last train, in the city where Mr. Percival lived. As they rode along in the electric cars towards the house where the new cousins were waiting, June looked up at Mr. Percival's face and said:—

"I do wish Hilary-Hilary could have come too. You need all the friends you can get, in the city, don't you?"

Mr. Percival smiled, and agreed with her. But by the time they came to the house, June was brimming with joy at the thought of the new cousins waiting for her; she had not the shadow of a doubt that they were as anxious for her as she was for them.

CHAPTER IV

A BIRTHDAY

JUNE had expected to meet five cousins; but when the whole tribe of young Percivals came dashing towards the front door as soon as they heard their father's key in the lock, she could have believed their number to be nearer fifteen.

She had never seen a white baby, but only Torm's little brown ones. Anne was the first of the cousins she really saw, — Anne, all pink and white and dimpled, with blue eyes and curls the color of corn-silk, reaching out her arms towards her father from Pauline's shoulder. The second was a boy who she knew must be Bob; then two girls near her own age; and lastly, Pauline, who seemed very sedate and grown-up. After kissing their father, the younger girls held back near the staircase, giggling very hard and, it must be confessed, staring.

Pauline threw her arms about June as soon as Mr. Percival had taken Anne; her sweet, motherly heart already yearned over the little stranger. It was Pauline, too, who led June into the bright dining-room, which seemed so full of furniture after the big bare rooms of Oakwood, and formally introduced the children to her. Bob manfully shook hands, then put his hand over his mouth and dashed from the room; for a long time it seemed to June that he must know no other way of moving but by bolts and rushes, but there was a growing bond of fellowship between them almost from the first day. Little Anne consented to be kissed, and then stared at her from the refuge of her father's arms. Eugenia and Aimée watched her steadily, even during supper, which they found waiting for them; they were apparently struck quite speechless.

Supper was so strange to June, with the bright gas lights overhead, and so confusing with its grace before and after the meal, the

many pretty dishes, the chatter of Pauline and Bob with their father, and the staring eyes of the two younger girls, that she could eat very little; and immediately afterwards Pauline took Baby Anne upstairs to bed, and Mr. Percival went off to his study, saying as he went out, —

“Get to your lessons, Bobby, man. And you three girls get acquainted with each other!”

Poor June's heart became heavier than before. Every child knows the embarrassment of such admonitions from grown people; it is like being ordered to talk, whereupon every inspiration one might have had disappears at once. June flushed, and looked at the others. She was painfully aware that she was not in the least like them, yet she could not quite make out the difference. Gene and Aimée, however, had no such difficulty from the first moment of June's arrival, and while June had never before known any white children, she knew perfectly well what

they must be like; but the Percivals, in their wildest imaginings, had never conceived of so queer a little figure as this new cousin. Mammy had done her best for her darling, but that best was very remarkable, indeed.

Aimée and Eugenia were simply dressed, in dark plaid dresses; but June had been clothed according to Mammy's ideas of what was right and proper. Her dress was also of plaid, to be sure; but the plaid was silk, and of such a combination of colors — brown, purple, and bright apple green — as had not been sold in any shop for thirty years or more. Mammy had made the little dress with a tightly fitting waist which fastened primly up the front, and came well down over June's thin shoulders; the fullness of the sleeves began about halfway to her elbows, and was gathered into narrow bands at the wrists. Her skirt was neither pleated nor gored, but very full, and gathered; it reached quite to her shoe-tops, too, for

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Mammy had demanded, when June complained of its length:—

“Too long? Ain’t you gwine travelin’? Ain’t you gwine to be in yo’ teens by de time you gits dar? An’ ain’t you a *lady*? Huh? Answer me dat! Too long!”

But the difference did not end with their clothes. Gene and Aimée wore their hair tied back with ribbon bows, and little wisps of it escaped to soften the outlines of their faces; June’s black curls were rolled back into a quaint, old-fashioned net shaped like a beaver’s tail! And about her little brown throat was a wide embroidered collar that had been the pride of her Aunt Lucille Mary in the year in which she went to her first party! Poor little June!

As Bob went to his lessons, June saw that he winked at his sisters and nodded towards herself. She flushed hotly, and had to swallow hard to keep down that mysterious lump in her throat that she had been feeling ever since she left Oakwood Manor. She had felt

it first when Mammy's faithful arms were around her for the last time; and she had felt it again when Unc' Tribby openly wept at the Ferryville Station, and again when Hilary-Hilary had bidden her good-bye in New York.

The three girls sat silent, in miserable embarrassment, for several minutes. Eugenia was the first to speak, and Eugenia was one of those well-meaning persons who need no other punctuation mark than the query; she went through life, to the end of her days, trying to learn, and if she failed at all in her endeavor it was never because she forgot to ask questions.

"How old are you?" was the way she broke the ice with June.

"Twelve," replied June, looking at her timidly. Then, suddenly remembering that this very day was her birthday, she corrected herself hastily, and blushed. "No, thirteen," she said.

Aimée giggled, and Gene asked, in a supe-

rior tone, "Gracious! Don't you know your own age, Juliet?"

June always refused to answer to the name of Juliet, so she remained silent; but Eugenia took her silence as an admission of ignorance.

"Where are you in school?" was her next venture.

June frowned: she disliked the very name of school. "I can read already," she said proudly. "I don't have to go to school."

The others being as yet unaware of June's ideas on education, this reply caused them great astonishment. Aimée's eyes opened wide, and Eugenia asked, in a tone of amazed respect:—

"Why, Juliet Lansing! You don't have to go to school? Have you got to equations yet?"

Eugenia was sure of herself when it came to mathematics, and knew that she need not be ashamed of her achievements there, even before this strange girl who need no longer go to school; she asked her question with no

small amount of pride. June, however, knew nothing whatever of figures; her grandmother had detested them, and had spent all her efforts upon teaching June to read; she had taken it for granted that the rest of her education would follow, somehow. Therefore June replied:—

“I have never been anywhere in all my whole long life but in Ferryville and the Manor and here, and I don’t know where Equasia is!”

It took Eugenia and Aimée half a minute to discover what she meant; then they fell upon each other’s shoulders with roars of laughter.

June watched them with head held high until she felt the tears very near her eyes; then anger arose in her small breast, for surely never before had a Lansing had such a reception. She stood up before them in the plaid silk dress, not knowing just what to do or say; this feeling that was making her tremble was new to her.

Then Aimée, looking at the quaint little figure, asked:—

“Who is your dressmaker, Cousin Juliet?”

At that, the tears came, but June’s fists clenched tightly; although she was trembling, she knew what to say. As always when she was excited, she spoke the language as she had heard it from her cradle.

“You-all are no ’count, low-down, good-for-nothin’ trash!” she cried. “You-all don’t know no more ’bout bein’ a lady than Torm’s old brack dog does; you ain’t got any sense and you ain’t got any manners, and I won’t stay in the same house along with you!”

With that she rushed out of the room, leaving Eugenia and Aimée too amazed at the strange tirade to move or speak; she rushed to the big front door, and began pounding upon it and shaking the knob, screaming all the while, —

“Let me out! Let me outen here! I won’t stay locked in! I won’t stay here! I’m goin’

home to my Mammy! I won't stay in this house! Let me outen here! Let me out!"

In a moment the house was all confusion; Bob came dropping downstairs first by way of the banisters; then Pauline wildly running, and Mr. Percival close behind her. Eugenia and Aimée, the culprits, stood in the shadow of the dining-room door, too frightened at what they had done to move or speak.

Polly's arms were about June at once, but the child was too wild with fright by that time to pay any heed to Polly's soothing words. Mr. Percival put his arms around her, and urged her, still screaming and struggling, upstairs; then he seated himself before his study fire and drew her to his knee.

There, while Pauline smoothed her curls, which had fallen free of the ugly net, and bathed her face and caressed her, Mr. Percival talked to her of the love they were all going to feel for her, and how they longed to make her happy among them, and explained that she was not locked in except as the



SHE RAN TO THE BIG FRONT DOOR, AND BEGAN
POUNDING UPON IT AND SHAKING THE KNOB

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others were, by being part of a family, and how she must try to learn to be like other children, with their help; and when at last she was quiet, Aimée and Eugenia were sent for.

The culprits had had time to think over their rudeness, and June's words had cut them deeply, as they deserved. They were thoroughly frightened and ashamed.

Aimée, who was as brave and generous as she was vain and pretty, spoke at once. "We were teasing her, Father, and we were perfectly horrid. I'm awfully sorry."

"I was the worst," Eugenia said, with a break in her voice. "She said we were n't ladies, and we were not either. I was just as mean as I could be!"

Mr. Percival looked at them quietly, while Pauline stooped and kissed June again. Their father's judgment was always the kindest and fairest in the world, but the children would have dreaded it less if they had respected it less, or could have found some

fault with it. Finally, seeing that they were growing more miserable every minute, he asked, "Why did you do it?"

Eugenia spoke with trembling lips. "I'd rather not say before Juliet, Father!"

Aimée's pretty head was on Polly's shoulder. "She may have my new blue dress if she wants it, Father, and I'll give her my two best hair-ribbons," she sobbed.

Mr. Percival's lips twitched a little at that, but he said sternly, "I think I understand why you did it. But I also think it will take more than dresses and hair-ribbons to make this dear little girl love you after such treatment. Will you shake hands and forgive them, June?" he asked tenderly.

June hid her face against his coat, but held out a hot little hand which the girls took, rather limply; then, as she was crying again, Mr. Percival led her to Pauline's room, and left them together.

Pauline said very little at first, but took her across the room to see Anne, asleep in

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her little white bed with brass knobs, the prettiest bed June had ever seen; then she drew June down beside her on the couch, and asked her about her journey, and told her something about the way the days were spent by the different members of the Percival household.

June was not quite ready for bed when they heard a bell sounding through the house; she jumped up, and cried, excitedly, "Oh, what is that?" It was the first doorbell she had ever heard!

Pauline smiled, and explained. "That is the bell that rings when any one is at the front door; I must see what it is, dear, but I'll be back."

Then June heard many exclamations from below, and in a moment Pauline came running upstairs again and into the room carrying a large flat box.

"It is for you, Juliet!" she exclaimed. "This box has just been sent from one of the stores, and it is addressed to you!"

June's eyes opened wide; she had never received a box addressed to herself, and could scarcely understand what Pauline meant. She shook her head.

"I reckon it ain't for me; it must be some other Juliet."

"The label reads 'Miss June Lansing,'" Polly declared, "and Father said that is what they call you; is it?"

June nodded. "Maybe it is, then," she said, but did not look very much pleased. "You open it, won't you? Do you think it is alive?"

Whereupon Pauline opened the box, and gave June a yellow envelope which lay on top of the folds of tissue paper. It was the first telegram June had ever seen; they read it together:—

SEND COMPLETE OUTFIT FOR GIRL THIRTEEN TO MISS JUNE LANSING, 46 ELDER STREET. AM TELEGRAPHING MONEY WITH THIS. ENCLOSE CARD HAPPY BIRTHDAY.

H. Warburton.

❖ A BIRTHDAY ❖

And under the folds of paper lay Hilary-Hilary's birthday gift; a blue dress trimmed with braid and brass buttons, a dress of white serge, a dark-blue coat, a plain little school-girl hat, and many other things the like of which June had never possessed before, even to a small red pocketbook.

Of course the things had to be tried on, and Aimée and Eugenia were allowed to come in and share in the excitement, so that all embarrassment between the three was forgotten. And when June was alone in her little bed at last, she lay with her treasures all around her, where she could touch them in the night, and see them the first thing in the morning; and Hilary-Hilary's telegram folded in the little red pocketbook was held fast in her hand.

Yet the first thing she saw in the morning was not the pretty new garments that her first friend's forethought had provided for her, so that she might be dressed like her cousins, and be spared part, at least, of the

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embarrassment of her new home; instead of opening her eyes on her dresses and hat, she opened them on Anne's bright morning face bending over her. The baby had crawled over to visit her in that early hour when Pauline, more accustomed to her enticements, preferred a last morning nap; she was kneeling beside June's shoulder, bending down until her curls brushed June's cheek, and saying over and over, —

“Wake uppy, wake uppy! I 'ikes oo!
I 'ikes oo!”

CHAPTER V

THE NEW COUSIN

JUNE's first year with the Percivals was a more or less troubled one, and the troubles began with the very first morning. When little Anne had trotted away to the dining-room, which was in its usual hurry-or-you'll-be-late-to-school hubbub, no one noticed, for a while, that June did not come down. One or another of the motherless children was apt to be late, and to come rushing down with a hair-ribbon for Pauline to tie or a frantic appeal for lost schoolbooks or rubbers, or, if the hour was dangerously near school-time, with a tentative headache. So at first June's absence was not noticed.

Then Mr. Percival was forced to look up over the barricade of his morning paper, because Anne was thumping upon it with her porridge spoon, and telling him, "I 'ikes June! Dadda-da, I 'ikes June!"

“Why, yes, my dear! So do I!” Then he looked around the table, and asked, “Where is June? Where is your cousin, children?”

No one seemed concerned with her absence, but Pauline, always the little mother, jumped up. “I’ll go up and see whether she is too shy to come down alone, Father,” she said.

But Pauline, busy eldest of five, had never so much as dreamed of the almost regal state, tattered and poverty-stricken though it was, that had surrounded June at home. She found the erstwhile autocrat of Oakwood Manor seated on the side of her little bed, calmly waiting.

“Come, dear!” said Polly, surprised. “Come, hurry up! Breakfast is ready!”

June’s little dark face put on its most indignant expression. “Then why does n’t somebody come dress me?” she asked.

Pauline gasped, quite as if a cold blast had struck her face. Then she managed to ask, “Do what?”

June repeated her question, and added, "How can I put on my own shoes and stockings?" as if that must settle any possible dispute.

For a moment Pauline stared; then she fled. "Father!" she called, from the stairway, — "Father, dear! May I speak to you a moment?"

Mr. Percival's manner towards Pauline was always as courtly as towards any woman of his acquaintance. "Certainly, my daughter," he said, coming out and closing the dining-room door behind him; he was accustomed to such secret conferences with his young housekeeper.

Pauline repeated June's questions, and Mr. Percival looked amused and a little bewildered.

"Dear me! Dear me!" he said. "A remarkable child — very!"

"But — but I never heard of a big girl like that waiting for any one to dress her, Father! Is she —?"

Mr. Percival laughed at Pauline's raised eyebrows and dismayed expression.

"Oh, there is nothing wrong with her, my dear!"

Then he told Pauline about Mammy and Unc' Tribby and their small multitude of descendants. "So you see," he added, "our little June has probably been waited on all her long life, as she would say. Suppose you help her out to-day, Pollykin, and I'll have a little talk with her by-and-by. Dear me! Dear me! The poor child has a great deal to learn."

So Pauline helped June into the pretty new garments that Hilary-Hilary had sent, and was glad that the other girls and Bob had departed for school before June was at last ready for breakfast. For Pauline's tender heart was glad to spare the little girl, who was beginning to feel sufficiently at home to chatter quite gayly, in her own peculiar way, about her new surroundings. After breakfast Mr. Percival took her upstairs to his library,

and tried to explain to her some of the differences between her old life and what she would find in the new one. Then he departed for his work at the library, and left June with Pauline and Baby Anne.

"Is he going out to see the corn?" was June's first question of Pauline. "I don't see any fields anywhere at all. I don't see anything but other people's houses. What do you let other people build their houses right in your yard for?"

Pauline tried to explain how differently people lived in the city.

"Well," was June's next question, "what do you do about your hogs and 'taters?"

"We buy all those things at the store, June," she said. "We have no garden, unless it is Anne's sandpile in the back yard, and we have no farm, no fields, no woods like yours at Oakwood."

June's eyes were very round. "Mercy," she said, "you must be rich, richer than Mr. Hilt! But I don't see just how you get along."

She saw still less as the days passed. They were heartbreaking days for a while; the difficulties of readjustment, the pangs of homesickness, and the many things she had to learn made an accumulation which would have daunted an older and wiser person than little June.

School was the greatest difficulty. At first she refused to go at all; but when Mr. Percival had explained and impressed upon her that all children must go to school, and when Bob had openly taunted her, and the girls smiled at her daily exhibitions of ignorance, she reluctantly consented to go.

Her interview with the principal might have been amusing enough to an observer, but it was painful to June and quite shocking to the principal. That lady was moved to dismay by the child's inconsequential answers.

"Oh, I don't have to know that," said June, with a patient little smile, when asked a problem in mental arithmetic. "Torm attends to all those things for me. I don't

have to bother *my* haid about apples and bricks and things."

Never had the gray-haired woman heard such heresy. She waited until she had recovered her breath. Then she said, "I think you belong in the first grade, Juliet."

But when June found herself in a room full of young children who could answer questions which were too complicated for her, her wrath and indignation very soon grew beyond bounds. She stood it as long as she could, sitting in dignified silence, with flushed cheeks and snapping eyes; then, when the teacher insisted upon her attempting to add some figures, June arose, and in spite of all protests, all commands, left the room and the school building, hat and books and all else but her shame forgotten.

Pauline heard her burst into the front door, heard her frantic rush upstairs, and, following, saw her throw herself down on her bed in a storm of tears.

"Dear me! Dear me!" said kind Mr.

Percival, when the wonderful tale had been told him that evening. Then he held June in front of him, and smiled teasingly in her face until it was blushing and dimpling. "So this is the little girl who knows so much that she does n't need to go to school! Dear me!"

But June had learned her lesson. "I do need to go to school!" she cried. "I do! I don't know one single thing! I reckon I'm just about the ignorantest person in the whole wide world! But —"

Her eyes filled with tears, and he understood her trouble. "But you do not want to go to *that* school! Is that it, little June?"

She threw her arms about his neck. "They were such little, little chillen!" she said.

After this Mr. Percival and Pauline taught her as well as they could in their spare minutes, but during her first month with the Percivals it would have been hard to find a more lonely, homesick, unhappy little girl.

Then one day there came to visit them a gentle, white-haired old lady who smilingly

explained that she had come especially to make the acquaintance of the little girl who owned her grandson Hilary. She stayed for a whole day with the Percivals, watching June with the others; then, in the late afternoon, she had a long private talk with Mr. Percival in his study.

“She is very like her mother, Frank,” she said to him, as they came downstairs together, “and we do not want her to grow up unhappy or willful. Pauline is too young to look after this chick just at first; you must let me have her for a while.”

So, in a pleasant hurry, June’s little trunk was packed once more, and she went back with Mrs. Warburton, the Percival children’s great-grandmother, to her tiny suburban cottage.

The little house was far more homelike to her than any city house could ever be; there were roses and honeysuckle over the porch, and a fine old garden all around it. There were chickens and kittens, a low-branching

cherry tree, an old attic full of treasures, and a dear little gate that June loved to swing on, and that always slammed and screeched, so that Mrs. Warburton was always looking over her spectacles at it and saying, "Dear me! I really must have that gate fixed!" And yet it slammed and protested as long as there was a piece of it.

It was a house where any child would feel at home, and Hilary-Hilary's grandmother would have been loved by any child. The very first evening, at the supper table, she talked to June about her mother, and June told her how she had really doubted that she had had either father or mother, until Hilary-Hilary had explained that she had lost them while a tiny baby. Mrs. Warburton asked many questions about Mammy and Unc' Tribby, Torm and the chillen, and June chattered in her old impulsive way, often falling into the negro dialect that both amused and horrified Mrs. Warburton. That was one of the first things she corrected in

the child; but June had many other things to learn, in spite of Mammy's noble efforts to "raise her up" properly. It was very soon settled between them that June should borrow Hilary-Hilary's grandmother for her own; and her affection once won, there was little trouble in persuading her to learn. She was quick enough to do so when once convinced of the necessity; and Mrs. Warburton, who had friends everywhere, persuaded two young teachers of her acquaintance to give June an hour or two each, weekly, in various studies, as soon as she returned to the city. So, in enjoyment and anticipation, her days at the little cottage passed quickly and happily, although often, at night, she would cry herself to sleep, thinking of Oakwood and Mammy.

Her return to the Percival house was very different from her arrival, thanks to Grand-mamma Warburton; now the little Southern girl set about getting acquainted with her Northern cousins with a brave heart.

Bob at first seemed to consider her his rightful prey, and was never tired of devising ways of teasing her; but June soon discovered that she could meet him on his own ground and beat him in the things he most prided himself upon. In climbing and wrestling and throwing she was his superior; and, when she had once proved that, Master Bob treated her with more respect. Before long they were avowed allies.

"It certainly is too bad you're a girl, June," he confided, on the afternoon she first succeeded in holding his shoulders to the floor. "You're just wasted, as a girl!"

And June agreed with him!

Eugenia was a student, and her one ambition was to go to college. Eugenia was working away towards the goal of her ambition; her kindly, near-sighted eyes never seemed to see anything beyond her books. June adored Pauline and made a plaything of Anne: she teased Bob, and was decidedly in awe of Eugenia; but she longed with all her

heart to be taken into pretty Aimée's confidence as chum and companion. By the time she had been a member of the family for a couple of years, her feeling of awe towards Gene had disappeared, and amusement had taken its place. Whenever June, in one of her wild moods, would mimic her cousin's funny, precise ways, Eugenia would look a little bewildered, as if she had been too suddenly awakened from sleep. She seemed to look upon June's gambols as upon the capers of a puppy or the enticing playfulness of a kitten; and in spite of the roars of delight from the rest of the family June's teasing left her only amused and tolerant. For June was a wonderful mimic, and Gene's peculiarities made her an easy prey. But, somehow, it took her longer to win her way into the real depths of Aimée's heart than to win the love of any of the others.

Aimée was the beauty and nearest June's age; and as Mr. Percival's salary as librarian was not large and his pockets were always

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open to every appeal, there was not very much finery to be had, even for a beauty. Eugenia would have been perfectly content to go in sackcloth, if she might at the same time have a book in her hand; and Polly was one of those wonderful people who can manage to look well in their year-before-last hats; but June had a most disastrous habit of tearing everything, of dropping a pen in her lap, or finding and embracing every newly painted place in the neighborhood. There would not have been very much spending money for Aimée even if June had not come to share it, nor even if she had not been such a careless, luckless person. As it was, there was very little, indeed, when that was divided by two.

As the months passed, the Princess of Oakwood grew more and more into the heart of the family, until by the time she had been with them three years, every one had almost forgotten that she was not one of the Percival brood, every one, that is, except Aimée; and with "the Percival girls," as the neighbors

called them, it was share and share alike. A new dress was an event; a new hat made a festival; an entire new suit would have made an epoch.

So when, on June's sixteenth birthday, a large square box arrived by express, and when the excited June lifted and held up before the equally excited family a magnificent velvet hat with a splendid ostrich feather, they one and all felt that the gift was of far more importance than the birthday. If Aimée turned a little pale, no one noticed it; and she was the first to congratulate June.

"It's from Hilary-Hilary, I know!" cried June, standing, like the Goddess of Liberty, with her hand held high above her head, the hat taking the place of Liberty's enlightening torch.

"But why on earth should he ever think of sending you a hat?" cried Polly, who was eyeing the marvel in a way that might have warned June.

June flushed a little. "Well," she said,

“you know how hard it is to write to a person you have n’t seen for a long time, Polly! I never *can* think of anything to say to Hilary-Hilary, so the last time I wrote him I just told him all about your new hat!”

The others shouted, and June got very red.

“Oh, June!” cried Polly. “The idea of writing to Cousin Hilary about my hat!”

“Oh, *do* you suppose he thought I was hinting?” cried poor June.

Mr. Percival had been an amused observer of the scene and now he drew June to his side. “Not at all, little daughter,” he said. “Hilary was in just the same predicament you were! You did n’t know what to write about, and fell back on a hat; Hilary did n’t know what to send for your birthday, and I can just see how glad he was to follow your good example! He probably grasped at that hat as at an inspiration!”

Mr. Percival laughed, and even Bob joined in with a sympathetic chuckle.

“And it certainly *is* a hat!” Mr. Percival



"BUT WHY ON EARTH SHOULD HE EVER THINK OF
SENDING YOU A HAT?"

added, looking very queerly at it as June poised it on her head and turned around and around to show it off.

"It seems very wonderful," said Eugenia, who was inspecting it as if it were a biological specimen.

"It is per—fectly be-e-eautiful!" Aimée declared. "Just *look* at that feather!"

"June looks like a fairy princess in it," said Anne, — "like Cinderella!"

"More like a peacock," said Bob.

Pauline was shaking her head. "I'm afraid," she said, "I am really afraid, June darling, that it is rather too much of a hat for Miss Sixteen."

June turned to her with consternation on her face; the others, too, stood at attention.

"Oh, Polly!" cried June, "you don't mean that I can't wear it?"

Mr. Percival was quietly smiling, as if something pleased him.

"I'm afraid I do, June," said Pauline. "It's a beautiful hat, of course, and must

have cost a fortune, but nobody but a man would have thought that a young girl could wear it. It is only fit for a fairy princess, as Anne says, or one of the wealthy ladies on the Hill." The Hill was the fashionable part of town.

Aimée's eyes had filled in quick sympathy with June. "Oh, Father! June can wear her lovely hat, can't she?" she begged.

But Mr. Percival was now looking very much pleased, indeed. "W—e—ell," he said, "I was hoping that my girls would find that hat ra-ther too magnificent."

June said nothing, but her face was pale. She and Aimée had their arms about each other — partners in distress!

"It would n't do to discard Cousin Hilary's gift altogether," Pauline decided. "How would it do, June, to cut off some of the brim of the hat, and make the trimming a little simpler?"

It was part of June's good fortune always to be able to make the best of things. "Of

course!" she cried. "That will be the very thing!"

She put the hat on her head again, and turned towards the mirror over the mantel; then she laughed at the almost grotesque image reflected there. "I do look as if I were masquerading! And — oh, Pollykins, may Aimée have just the feather on her best hat?"

Pauline looked at her father, who nodded and beamed his approval of the new arrangement.

"Then I will cut off the brim of your hat, June," said Aimée of the deft fingers, "and I think you are a perfect angel to lend me your feather. I will take the very best care in the world of it!"

"I would have given you the feather, anyhow, Maysie," June declared. Then her wholesome sense of humor returned, and she laughed. "Oh, was n't it funny of Hilary-Hilary to send me a hat? Would n't you have liked to have seen him picking it out?"

The others laughed with her. "I think

picking out copper mines would be more in his line," said Mr. Percival. "I hear that Hilary is becoming one of the most eminent engineers in the country."

"Well," said June, with a great air of possessorship, "I do think he might come to see us some time, instead of just writing!"

But the sequel of June's hat — if a hat can have a sequel — came later, on the 22d of February, when Aimée went off to a high-school tea arrayed in her best beaver, now trimmed with the feather, in Polly's fur collar and Gene's best white gloves. June was housed with a cold, and Eugenia disdained all social events; so Aimée had gone off alone, in grandeur.

When she came back she stood in the doorway of the dining-room, and at first made no reply to June's cheerful questions.

"Well, was it pretty? Who was there?"

When she got no answer June looked up. "What's the matter?" she cried, at the sight of poor Aimée's face.

Then Aimée marched into the room, and turned around. "Look!" she cried, in a tragic tone.

"Oh!" shrieked Anne. "Look at the feather!"

But, alas! It was a feather no more! June afterwards described it as fried excelsior. It was shriveled and scorched, a travesty of its former beauty.

"Maysie!" cried June.

"What on earth has happened to it?" Pauline asked.

Then Aimée faced them, and told her story with all the ardor of a queen of tragedy. "I was standing near the mantelpiece, talking to some of the girls. I was eating chocolate peppermints, and I did n't notice anything unusual. But some one said, 'What a queer odor!' And some one else said, 'It smells like an experiment in chemistry!' And some one else said, 'No, it smells like feathers!' And then — then everybody seemed to be pointing at me and saying things, and I turned

around, and one of the maids grabbed off my hat, hat-pins and all — and oh! June, your be-e-autiful feather was just sizzling up like fireworks!”

Poor Aimée ended in a burst of tears; June sprang up, and had her arms about her neck in an instant. “Oh, don’t!” she cried, laughing. “Don’t, Maysie darling! I don’t care one mite! Truly I don’t!”

“I’ll s-s-save up, and b-b-buy you another!” Aimée sobbed.

But June, at that, gave her shoulders a shake. “You goose!” she cried. “Why not buy me an ostrich?”

So it ended in laughter, and also in something more; for the two girls, from that day, were devoted friends, and Hilary-Hilary’s amusing present accomplished what he had begun four years before. Even to Aimée June was now one of the family.

CHAPTER VI

FARTHER ON

"I FINK," said Anne, "I fink June has sewed shoe-buttons in the heel of my stockings! I don't like the way June mends!"

Anne, seven years old, was still the pet of the family, and still kept a few of her baby words; but it was evident enough that she had opinions of her own.

Pauline laughed. "Never mind, precious! June does the best she can! And it's Christmas Eve, so we won't be cross. Trot upstairs and put on another pair."

"Where is June?" asked Eugenia, who was home from college on her first Christmas vacation. She and Aimée were busily stringing cranberries and popcorn, while Pauline was bending over various little parcels which every one else was pretending not to see.

"She said she was going to the express office," said Aimée. "You know she sent to

Virginia for some things for Christmas, and now she's anxious about them."

"I think it is too late for her to be out alone," said Pauline anxiously. "I shall have to light the lamp — it is getting too dark to see!"

They worked on for a while longer; then it seemed that some one else wanted to know where June was, for Norah, flushed and floury, poked her head around the pantry door, and said, "Here's an old colored body in me kitchen askin' for Miss June, an' I ain't got time to bother wid her. Please some of yez come!"

"I'll go," said Anne, who had come back with a smiling face that betokened comfort. In another moment she came flying into the room again.

"Polly! Girls! What do you think? It's June's Mammy!"

The girls looked at each other, at first too amazed to speak. Then Pauline ran into the kitchen, the others crowding after her.

The kitchen was half in darkness, for Norah was too thrifty to light the gas until she could no longer see; and in a chair in front of the range sat a queerly clad little figure, who rose when Pauline spoke, and greeted them with a succession of bobs and bows. Her dress was of some inconspicuous dark material, and she wore two voluminous aprons, a gingham of large blue checks and a white one under it. A big old shawl of the Paisley variety dear to our great-grandmothers, with a variegated border and a black center, enveloped her shoulders and arms, and a queer deep bonnet almost hid her face and head, although it could not entirely cover a kerchief of colors so bright and varied as to proclaim itself plaid even in the dusk of the kitchen.

“Why!—why,” said Polly, going forward, — “why, surely, this can’t be our June’s Mammy? Where did you come from?”

“I done come by de express, Miss Polly, honey! Ain’t you Miss Polly? An’ ain’t dat

Miss Ginny?" — (pointing to Aimée) "and ain't dat Miss May?" (waving a small hand gloved in black cotton towards Eugenia). "Sho, now, how could I mistaken ary one o' my baby's li'l' cousins what I done heard so much about? An' dat — come yer, honey, come to Mammy — now, bress my heart! Ef dat ain't li'l' Miss Anne!"

Anne got very close to Pauline, and they all stood amazed at the old woman's talk.

"An' now, please, Miss, whar's my own lamb, my li'l' Miss June? Why ain't she come to greet her Mammy?"

At that Pauline somewhat recovered. "She is not here," she said. "She — she was expecting something by express, and —"

Here the old woman chuckled, and seated herself again, rocking back and forth in the chair and patting her knees with her hands.

"Hyah! Hyah! Yas'm, I reckon she was a-lookin' for something to come by de express! But I reckon she wa' n't a-lookin' for me!"

So much did the old soul seem to enjoy her pleasantries that the girls had to join in her laugh; and, their first astonishment over, they drew nearer. Then the old woman lifted to her lap a calico bag that she had evidently brought with her, and began to draw things out of it.

“Look a-here!” she cried, taking out some enormous yams. “Look what Tribby done sent my baby! Torm grew dem yams, and de chillen gathered dese chinquapins.”

“Oh! What funny little nuts!” cried Anne, into whose arms the old woman had put a large and well-filled bag.

“Funny? Huh! You jest tas’ dem chinquapins, an’ say whether dey’s funny — or *good!*” Then she drew forth, with many exclamations and — it must be confessed — with many grunts, as if the task were too much for her old arms, some slabs of bacon, some long strings of plump sausages, a ham, another bag which contained hominy, and lastly, holding it up proudly, a fat rabbit!

"Now, look a-yonder!" she cried. "Look at dat rabbit! I reckon Miss June ain't expectin' all o' dat by de express, is she?"

Anne was dancing with excitement and delight, the girls were laughing and watching, and even old Norah had dusted her hands and was looking on from a distance at the pile of good things growing on table and floor.

"Oh!" Anne cried, jumping up and down, "is that a really truly rabbit? Oh, has n't it got the funniest little tail you ever saw?"

"Sho now!" said their guest. "Ain't Miss June nuvver done tole you how-come de rabbit done lost his tail?"

"No!" cried Anne. "*You* tell it!"

"Now, jest a-listen to de chile! Me tell it?"

"Oh, please!" Anne begged, clasping her hands. She was as excited as if Mammy were a whole play.

"Well, maybe I'll tell you some time, honey! But I reckon it must be 'most time

for Miss June to be back, ain't it? We-all don't go traipsin' de roads in de dark, whar I come from!"

Pauline was becoming anxious. "No, nor here either, Mammy. It is n't like June to stay so long!"

"Oh, but do tell me how the rabbit lost his dear little tail! Oh, please tell it now!" Anne was begging.

"Well, I'll try to tell you, Miss Anne, honey; but de minute Miss June gits here I'm gwine stop!"

Anne sat down on the floor, and the others perched on the kitchen table and on the arms of Norah's rocking-chair while Norah looked on, as absorbed as any of them.

"Oncet upon a time a li'l' ol' Marse Rabbit lived in a hole in de ground, down in de corn-fiel', along wid his granny. He had n't nuvver been outen de world, 'cause his granny liked to go to de market herself, an' dey was n't no 'casion for his goin'. But 'long about November, w'en ol' Marse Frost come

a-nippin' aroun', Marse Rabbit's granny got took rale bad wid de rheumatiz. So one mo'nin' she say, 'Son, I reckon you-all better go out an' get de breakfas' dis mo'nin', 'cause my ol' bones sure is achin'?'

"So li'l' Marse Rabbit he started off to go to market."

"*How* can a rabbit go to market?" cried Anne.

"Ain't de corn-fiel' a market? Ain't de turnip-fiel' a market? Ain't de nut-trees markets fo' de rabbits? Huh?" the still bonneted figure demanded, indignantly.

"Oh, yes!" Anne said, once more a believer.

"Well, den! Li'l' Marse Rabbit started off to de market, but pretty soon he come a-runnin' an' a-stompin' back.

"'Oh, Granny!' sez he, 'I'se so scairt! A gret long gray thing run along in front o' me, an' I could n't git past it nohow!'

"De ol' granny-rabbit she sez, sez she, 'Why did n't you run de other way?' So de next mo'nin' de li'l' Marse Rabbit started

off ag'in, but ag'in he come a-runnin' an' a-stompin' back.

“‘Oh, Granny,’ sez he, ‘I run de other way, an’ I run an’ I run twell I got to de top o’ de hill. An’ dar was a gret big roun’ shiny-red thing!’

“De ol’ granny-rabbit she say, ‘Why did n’t you set a trap fo’ it?’ So at night when it was dark li’l’ Marse Rabbit went to de top o’ de hill an’ sot a trap, an’ in de mo’nin’ he got up rale early an’ cropt off to see what he done cotched in his li’l’ trap. An’ dis yer time he come back in more of a hurry dan ever befo’, an’ he was a-hollerin’ an’ a-screechin’ an’ a-yellin’ — ‘Oh, Granny! Look at my po’ tail! I ran to my li’l’ trap, an’ dar was de big roun’ shiny-red thing! I tried to take a-holt of it, but it was so hot I drapt it! I was so scairt I ran down de hill, an’ de shiny-red thing come a-rollin’ along after me! Faster I ran, faster it rolled, an’ closter it come, hotter I got, twell — twell it burned off my tail! Oh, Granny! Look at my po’ tail!’

"An' dar, sho' 'nuff, po' li'l' Marse Rabbit's tail was burned clare off, an' only a li'l' white stump was left! Dat's how-come dis yer rabbit got such a funny li'l' tail! An' ef you don't believe what I told you, you jest ask de next rabbit you see, an' he'll wobble an' wiggle his nose at you, 'cause he's still a-snivellin' about it!"

"O-o-o-oh!" said Anne, in a long-drawn sigh of delight, while the others laughed.

But Mammy stood up.

"Ain't nary one o' you asked me to stay!" she said. "But I reckon I will."

And with that, she threw off her bonnet, and drew off the black cotton gloves. There was a jump from Anne, a shriek from Norah, and cries from the girls! For the gloves had hidden small white hands, and the neck under the bandanna was white! Only Aimée was laughing.

"June! You wretch!" Pauline cried, pulling off the plaid kerchief.

And June presented a remarkable appear-

ance then, for she had darkened her face only a little above her eyebrows, and she seemed to be wearing a mask and the clothes of her old Mammy, while as to hands and top-knot she was June.

"Aimée! You were in the secret!" Eugenia cried. "Oh, June, why did n't you wait until Father and Bob could see you?"

"How on earth did you ever do it?" Pauline cried.

"Well, anyway," said Anne, "I believe that story about the rabbit. Because a rabbit *has* got a short tail, and it *does* wobble its nose!"

"Holy stars!" cried Norah, jumping towards her stove. "I forgot all about me gingerbread in the oven!"

June nodded at Aimée. "It was worth the work, was n't it, Maysie?" she asked. "Oh, girls, Maysie and I have had such a time to make this costume! I borrowed Mrs. Sullivan's aprons, because I knew Norah would recognize her own; and the rabbit and the

yams, and even this shawl and bonnet of Grandmamma's, did really come from Oakwood. I planned this ever so long ago, and wrote Mammy to send the clothes in my Christmas box, and get it off early. Mrs. Sullivan hid everything for me, ever since Tuesday, and helped me dress!"

"Mrs. Sullivan!" Pauline cried. "The grocer-man's wife? Oh, June, you do make friends with everybody, don't you?"

"Of course!" said June.

She repeated her performance as well as she could for the benefit of Mr. Percival and Bob, and later made herself into a dusky, feminine Santa Claus, to every one's delight. But her mimicking of Mammy made her a little homesick, and she was glad of the bustle of Christmas to help her over it.

June heard more or less regularly from the old people at home, Torm's oldest daughter being the scribe; but there seemed no prospect of her ever getting back to see them. Indeed, with Eugenia at college and Mr.



"I'LL TRY TO TELL YOU, MISS ANNE, HONEY; BUT DE
MINUTE MISS JUNE GITS HERE I'M GWINE STOP"

Percival in failing health, there were some anxious days for the girls. June shared every one's secrets — being confidante alike of her uncle, of Polly, of Bob, and of Aimée. Even Anne had a way of bringing all her little troubles to June; and to be the sharer of every one else's burdens was the penalty she had to pay for her quick and ready sympathy — although June would have declared that it was no penalty, but a blessing.

Hilary Warburton had remained her devoted friend, although she never saw him. Grandmamma Warburton wrote frequently to her great-grandchildren and to her dear adopted grandchild June, and these letters always contained a special message from Hilary-Hilary to "the little girl who owns me." June used to be rather provoked, about the time when she began to feel almost grown up, to think that to her first friend she remained the child of Oakwood, instead of the dignified high-school girl that she was.⁷

"And it does seem to me," she said to

Pauline one day, when they had just had one of Grandmamma's letters, "that Hilary-Hilary cares very little for us, to keep Grandmamma away as he does, and not to come East himself, either. And now he is going to South America!"

"Yes, June dear," said Polly, "but Cousin Hilary probably cares as much for his grandmother as we do!"

"He does n't," June declared. "He could n't possibly. And she is my own dear precious grandmother too, Polly Percival; I borrowed her, you know, and I have never returned her, and I'm never going to, either! And what does Hilary-Hilary go prancing all over the world for? Anybody'd think he was the only engineer there is!"

Polly laughed. "Father says he is rapidly becoming one of the most famous, anyway," she said.

A moment afterwards June sighed. "Oh, dear," she said, "I love you-all more than I can hold, Pollykins, but sometimes I do so

want to see my Mammy and my Grand-mamma — I mean my borrowed one! I'd — I'd almost be willing to sew all day long, if I could only just see those two once in a while!"

Polly laughed, and dumped a big basketful of stockings in June's lap. "Well, practice your sewing on these," she said, and ran away laughing. Poor June, in spite of Grand-mamma Warburton's careful teaching, could never learn to sew acceptably.

But anxious days were coming for the Percival family. As the weeks passed it became evident to Pauline's watchful eyes that her father was not strong. He dearly loved his work at the library, and if that had been all it would have been better for him and his children. But Mr. Percival had the missionary spirit: work for others he must, and, because he could give little else, he gave personal service. He was a valued member of the Charities Association; and it had been nothing unusual for him to spend hours after

his work at the library was over in visiting the cases reported to the board. But this winter, instead of going downtown, he more frequently came home to his comfortable, shabby couch in his library. He loved to have one of the girls beside him, reading or working or studying; most often it was his young housekeeper, with her mending, who kept him company there. And if Polly's heart contracted with dread at the times when he would speak of his children's future, or tell her what to do when he should be gone, she courageously kept her fears to herself, not suspecting that June's keen eyes saw everywhere.

It was during this anxious winter that the sad news came of dear Grandmamma Warburton's sudden death. Her last thoughts had been of June, and she had left her a small bequest.

It was June's first sorrow in her new home, and for weeks they could not speak of Grandmamma before her. Then, as time went on,

she thought less of her loss and more and more of those peaceful days in the little cottage and of the teachings of the wise old friend who had given her such a brave heart for facing her new life. As to the little bequest, she had her plans for that.

“Eugenia must finish college, and somehow Bob must, too,” said Mr. Percival, on one of the afternoons when he had come home to rest on the couch, and Polly was sitting beside him. “They must have their education, *must*; for you children may have to rely upon them, after a while. I don’t see any way now, but the way will open. I have given Eugenia this first year, at any rate. If it were only our little June, now, who wanted to go!”

He laughed, and Polly tried to laugh with him, although the tears were very near the surface, and though she did not understand in the least what her father meant by talking as if June had money enough to go to college. Surely Grandmamma Warburton’s two hun-

dred dollars would not go very far in that direction.

“But June as a blue-stocking does not impress me seriously,” he went on. “She is very like her dear mother — all impulsiveness. And she has her mother’s beauty and charm, too,” he added.

But if Mr. Percival was not thinking of Grandmamma Warburton’s two hundred dollars, June was thinking of it a great deal. Her mind was quite definitely made up in regard to it. She was only waiting for an opportunity for a talk with Mr. Percival, and when she saw Polly coming from the library with tears in her eyes she decided that now was her time.

She peeped around the door of the library. “May I come in?” she asked.

Mr. Percival always had a particularly tender smile for her. “If you will pay toll!” he said, holding out his hand to her, while she kissed his forehead and perched on the side of his couch.

"Uncle," she said, "don't you love me pretty nearly as much as if I really and truly belonged to you?"

Mr. Percival smiled. "What do you want, you monkey?" he asked.

June tried to look injured. "The idea of having such base suspicions, Uncle," she cried, opening her eyes wide. "I'm just thirsting for affection, that's all."

Mr. Percival laughed and pulled her hair, for little dark curls would escape and wave about her face, try as she would to be tidy. "You know whether anybody loves you or not," he said.

At that June laughed, as if satisfied. "Cert'n'y, cert'n'y, marster, I sho' do!" she cried, in excellent imitation of Unc' Tribby. "And," she went on, seriously, "you believe in doing as you'd be done by, don't you?"

"I hope so, indeed," laughed her uncle.

"And you'd do just anything in the world for anybody you loved, would n't you?"

"Now, what's in that curly head of yours?" Mr. Percival asked.

"And you're mighty proud of my excellent record in mathematics, are n't you?" she went on. Mr. Percival chuckled. "You would love to see me go to college and shine, would n't you?"

"Come! Out with it, young woman," said her uncle, growing suspicious.

"Well," she said, "I'd take anything in the world from you, so I'm doing as I'd be done by; and I'd do as much for anybody I love as you would, I reckon; and I could n't go to college if I wanted to, so it's no use telling me to use it myself as long as it lasts. I want to do something fine with dear Grand-mamma Warburton's money, so I want you to take it to help on Gene's college course — and I think you'll be positively un-Christian if you don't! Yes, I do," she hurried on, seeing protest in his face; "I don't need it, and I won't use it, and you know yourself that stupid old Gene needs all the college she

can get, to help her along in this world! So now!"

It ended in Mr. Percival's giving his consent. It was, after all, a generosity he could understand, for it was one that he would have been capable of. Mr. Percival was so good and kind himself that he was used to taking goodness and kindness in others for granted.

A few weeks after that, June had gone to the library one day to look up some references, and meant to walk home with her uncle. Instead, she came back alone, and with a troubled face.

"Oh, Polly!" she said, coming into the warm dining-room with red cheeks and nose and finger-tips. "Uncle would n't come home with me! He said he was obliged to go all the way down to Bank Street to see Mrs. Flynn — that poor woman he was telling us about the other day. The son has pneumonia, you know, and Uncle said he could n't conscien-

tiously come home until he was sure they were comfortable. And he did look so tired, Polly! And it is such fre-e-e-e-zing weather!"

Pauline looked serious. "Father did not seem so well to-day, either," she said anxiously. "If that boy is really very ill, it would be just like Father to stay there and help. Oh, dear!"

As dinner time came and passed, it was evident that Mr. Percival had, indeed, stayed. Bedtime came, and he did not return. Pauline sent the others upstairs, saying that she would wait in the dining-room, so that he might have something hot if he should return in the night. June crept downstairs after a while, declaring that she was too anxious to sleep, and they kept watch together. But it was not until little streaks of gray light were creeping past the window shades, making the gas light look curiously yellow, not until the milk wagons were beginning to rumble down the streets, that Mr.

Percival came home, looking flushed and haggard, but trying to speak cheerfully.

"My two good girls!" he said, as Polly brought him a steaming cup and June bent down to take off his overshoes. "Mrs. Flynn was so worn out with nursing — I was glad to let her rest while I watched."

But there was more watching, after that, for all of them, days and nights of it. Mr. Percival submitted to Pauline's insistence and the doctor was sent for. He came downstairs with an anxious face and an attempt at cheerfulness which did not deceive any one. Mr. Percival was very ill.

Then there were days when Aimée and Bob, little Anne, and even June, relied on Pauline for encouragement. Whenever she came from her father's room to give them what good news she could, she would always smile; but June often thought that she smiled only with her lips, not with her eyes.

But on the sixth day, a few minutes after the doctor had gone up to the sick-room,

❖ JUNE ❖

Polly came swiftly down the stairs, swayed in the doorway, and said, breathlessly, with her hand on her heart, "Bob, go out at once and telegraph for Gene!"

CHAPTER VII

A NEW HOME

THEY were five very serious young people when they met in consultation in the old dining-room, which looked so unfamiliar to them to-day, after seeing Eugenia off.

She had gone back to college very much against her will; but through Polly's persuasion and June's good sense she had been made to see that it would be a waste of time already paid for if she stayed at home. Besides, it was best for all of them that Gene should make the most of her education, for afterwards she would be able to add greatly to the family income by teaching. So poor Gene had left the old house reluctantly and tearfully. Polly and Aimée had helped her make two black dresses, while June, who still hated sewing as much as ever, had done the best she could with the cooking and housework, and had seen the many people

who called to ask after dear Mr. Percival's family. Until Gene was safely packed off not one of them had spoken of their future; but it had been seldom out of their thoughts, and now, at the end of the week, Pauline looked paler and thinner than ever.

It is so often the unexpected that happens. When the five returned from bidding Gene good-bye, Bob, as the man of the family, opened the door with their father's latchkey, and picked up a letter which had been left under the door.

It was addressed to Polly, and she exclaimed at once, "Why, it is from Cousin Hilary, children!"

So while Aimée was taking off her black hat before the looking-glass, and June was helping little Anne out of her coat, Polly stood before the fireplace and opened her letter. She read it through, and then, to the utter consternation of the others, sat down on the hearthrug and burst into tears. It was the first time during all those weeks of

suspense and grief that any of them had seen Polly cry.

June was down beside her in a flash. "Oh, Polly, Polly darling," she begged, "don't cry, don't! Oh, Polly, you'll break our hearts if you cry like that! What is the matter?"

Bob, too, knelt down beside them, and patted poor Polly's head so vigorously that her hat slipped off, carrying hair and hairpins down her back; while Aimée and Anne were in each other's arms, looking at their sister with wide-opened eyes. Pauline had been strength and courage to all of them; why was she crying now?

At last Polly tried to explain. She waved Hilary's letter towards Bob, and he, standing up, began to read:—

Dear Cousin Pauline:—

I have been in the wilds for several weeks past, and have only to-day received your letter telling me of your great loss. I loved your father, and —

Here Bob choked, cleared his throat, flung the letter towards Aimée and walked to the window, where he stood very close to the panes with his hands deep in his pockets.

“I can’t read that man’s fist,” he growled.

So Aimée began where he left off.

—and I can say no more than that. But it occurs to me that you must all feel in need of a change, and I have something to suggest which I hope may meet with your approval. Perhaps you know that I have not been willing to rent, or to change in any way, my grandmother’s little house in East Walford; it has been closed since her death, and it is just as she left it. If you and the others will consent to live in it I shall be very grateful, for I do not wish it to fall into decay, and I am unwilling to have strangers there. If you decide to do so, my agent, Mr. Williams, will attend to the details of having any repairs made that you may find necessary, and he will continue to pay the taxes and water rent,

as he has done for me until now. You will understand that it is because I am not willing to take rent for the house my grandmother loved that I hope you may care to live in it.

My love to all of the children, and especially to the little girl who owns me.

Affectionately your cousin,

HILARY WARBURTON.

Aimée laid the letter on the table, and bent over Anne again with tears in her eyes. For a few minutes only Polly's sobs were to be heard in the room; but presently June stood up and read the letter through again, and when she had finished it she said, softly, "Oh, Hilary-Hilary!"

Polly looked up through her tears. "I did n't know where on earth we could go," she said. June nodded, and Aimée said, "I have been thinking of that, too," while Bobby, from the window, grunted, "Me, too!" The same thought had been in the mind of each, but none had dared to open

the subject. Mr. Percival's illness had entirely emptied the family purse; there were the month's bills to be paid, and more months, an endless string of them, stretched threateningly into the future. No wonder Pauline had had no time for tears!

It was Anne who broke the tension of the moment, and they were all glad to laugh. "Oh, I remember that house! There's a garden to it, a really truly garden, where things grow! I hope the cherries at Grand-mamma's are ripe!" she exclaimed. "And do you suppose there will be any kittens?"

But Polly was already grave again; and Aimée was saying, "I thought Father had a life insurance? I am sure I have heard him say so."

Polly shook her head. "No, dear," she said sadly. "He did have, at one time, and he meant to renew it; but in January poor Mrs. Willetts was so sick, and Father just had to pay the rent for them; in March, too,

there were extra expenses for us; so the last premiums were not paid, and we have no life insurance. We have no money at all except what we can get from the sale of the furniture and other things here. I can't let myself think of what would have happened if Hilary had not offered us the house."

Although no one understood the situation as well as Pauline, yet it was enough to sober them all. Only Anne suggested a way out of the difficulty.

"I tell you what, Polly darling," she said, putting her arms about her big sister's neck, "we'll live on the cherries, as soon as they are ripe; I don't think they would be very good for us right now!"

Polly hugged Anne, and laughed, but Bob seemed to see more in the idea than the others.

"Don't laugh too soon at Anne's suggestion, Pol," he said. "There is more in it than you think. There's quite a little garden space back of the house there, and I remember that

Grandma Warburton used to have old Henry raise a lot of vegetables and things. What's the matter with our having a garden?"

June's cheeks flushed, as always when she was pleased. "Oh, Bob, you're a genius!" she cried. "We can! We can raise corn and potatoes and wheat and tobacco—" Then, when she saw the amazement on their faces, and remembered the size of their future vegetable "patch," she laughed. "Oh, I forgot," she exclaimed. "It is n't quite as large as my valley, is it? But anyway, we can surely grow vegetables enough for the summer, Bobby; and we will just go to work and do it, too!"

"That is all very well," said Pauline, "but we must have money, actual dollars and cents. Doctor Richards was talking to me about it the other day; he said he was almost sure he could get me a place as secretary or office assistant to a doctor who has lately come to the city from the South; it will not be unpleasant work, and it has the great

advantage that it will let me be home with you children by four o'clock every day."

So the conference ended, and preparation for the sale of what must be sold and for the moving began. But in the midst of the confusion Pauline did not forget Doctor Richards's suggestion—whence it happened that by the time the young people had moved into the little suburban cottage, which seemed to June to be full of her dear old friend's presence, Pauline was installed in her new place in the doctor's office in the city, going back and forth in the train like any business man.

But Bob, a few days after Polly's first day at work, said to them, after little Anne was in bed for the night, and the rest of them were gathered about the soft-shaded lamp in Grandmamma Warburton's tiny sitting-room, "Pol, I'm going to do something that you won't like!"

Pauline looked up at him with a smile; she was never afraid of the things Bob confessed

to beforehand. "I wonder if you really are," she said.

Bob perched on the arm of her rocking-chair, and pulled at the little curls at her neck. "Yes, I am," he declared. "And you'll please remember I'm the man of this family, and raise no objections. I've got a job."

Polly's eyes filled with tears. "Oh, Bob!" she cried; "you are n't going to stop school? Father did so want you to go to college!"

"Well, maybe I will yet," Bob replied. "But first I'm going to earn my keep, Polly Percival, so you may as well make up your mind to that! Only thing is, I s'pose you'll hate the way I'm going to do it."

Polly's tears overflowed, but she bit her lip bravely and said, "I guess I can trust you, big brother."

"Well, you'll have to trust me that it's the best I can do at present," said Bob. "Mr. Shinn, the milkman, wants a driver, and he's offered me the job. And — I'm going to take it."

Polly and Aimée said nothing, only looked at Bob; but June watched Bob with bright eyes and parted lips, as she looked at things or people she liked very much; when she saw that he was feeling a little hurt at his sisters' silence, she drew a deep breath.

"It's not so bad as it seems, Pol," Bob went on. "His driver has a lot of money to collect, and old Shinn says he won't ask to have me bonded, but will trust me, for Father's sake. He only wants me about two months, while his old driver is getting well of a broken leg; and he says if I make good he'll recommend me to his wife's cousin, Mr. Perkins, who is a teller in the Second National Bank, and he's pretty sure he can get me in there. He says a boy that has had a job and made good in it is a good deal better off than a boy who has never done any work at all."

Still Pauline and Aimée could not, apparently, bring themselves to approve; it was June who spoke.

"I'll tell you what *I* think of it," she cried.

"I think you are a man and a brother, Bob Percival, and I'll be proud to drive around with you any time you want me!"

Bob grinned. "No, thanks," he said. "Much obliged, June-bug, but I don't like the cut of your jib. No girls in mine!"

Yet he was obviously gratified at her approval, and the painful silence on the part of his sisters was forgotten. Aimée, always adoring June, drew her chair closer and kissed her; and for once Bob let Polly rest her head on his shoulder, while they talked it all out. When they had done so, it was June's turn to surprise them.

"You put me to shame, you two," she said. "I'm the only useless one of this family, and I'm tired of being a drone. Even Anne can sew; you ought to have seen the blessed baby darning stockings this afternoon! I can't do one single thing, and it seems to me it's about time I was learning to. I have been thinking about it for some time, Polly, and I went to-day to make arrangements."

"Oh June," Pauline sighed. "You too?"

"No," June laughed, "not a milk wagon, dear! I only wish I were so lucky, for then I could begin to earn right away. No, I'll have to let Bobby weather the storms, while I learn how to work; mine is stenography."

Pauline looked at her in surprise. "Why, June Lansing! What on earth do you want to do that for? Typewriting? Shorthand? Office work? Why, June, you little mountain-bird, you'd die, shut up in a stuffy office, dear!"

But June had made up her mind. "No, I shall not die, Pollykin, and I have already begun my lessons. I am going to be ready by the early fall, and this summer I can work in the garden."

"But" — Polly said, hesitatingly, — "but the money for your lessons, June?"

"Well, if I am going into business, I shall have to learn to be brave and venture, when the time comes," June said. "You know, I have the gold-piece Hilary-Hilary sent me

for Christmas; that will pay for my first twenty lessons; and after that I shall find a way."

So June began, also, to help the family; and when the time came for paying for the last of her lessons, she had, indeed, found a way which none of them could have foreseen. Aimée came upon her one afternoon reading a big green-bound garden book; June loved everything that blossomed, and was always poring over nature books, so that Aimée saw nothing unusual in the ponderous volume, until June looked up with a conscious air.

"You have such queer tastes, June," said Aimée, and sat down beside her on the sunny step. Already the air was so mild that the girls stayed out of doors, hatless and in their big coats, as many hours as they could spare. Aimée was looking tired, for the housework was her share of the family burden.

June closed the book, and sighed. "I know I have, Maysie," she said, putting her arm about Aimée's waist. "That's what comes

of being a torm-boy in my early youth!" They both laughed, and June went on. "Sometimes I just ache with longing to see my mountain and my valley, and Torm's little vegetable garden, and what are left of Grandmamma's roses, and the box borders! Sometimes the very thought of the scent of mock-orange makes me dizzy. And the spicy, red-brown scented shrubs, and the yellow roses!" The girls were silent for a while, and then June said, "Maysie, I've been wondering whether I could not supply the people on the Hill with old-fashioned flowers!"

Aimée was always practical. "But, June, you have n't time! I mean, it takes so long for roses and things to grow, and you need money now."

"Oh, I was n't thinking of going into the nursery or florist business. But look at Grandmamma Warburton's garden! It's quite full of lovely things, a little later; why not sell simple, old-fashioned bunches of flowers, the sort of bunch that any one

would like to tuck into the marketing, you know?"

She waved her hand at the garden before them; she had already done wonders with its neglect.⁷ The little paths were clear of weeds and the grass was cut; already the peonies, phloxes and irises were showing sturdy results of her care; and on the roses, in spite of their having been cut back so late, masses of tiny buds were peeping out, later to be a splendor of color. June's plan, which seemed daring enough to the two girls as they talked it over, was really simple.

"But no one would pay over five or ten cents for a bunch of flowers like those," Aimée said; "and where could you sell them?"

"I think Mr. Brady, the green-grocer, would do it for me," June replied. "Grand-mamma Warburton was so good to his wife, that time she was ill for a year, and Mr. Brady had all he could do to keep his store going. I remember when I was here with her, she

took me to see Mrs. Brady, and we carried her four of Brownie's eggs, and some jelly and roses. Well, I am going to see Mrs. Brady again. And pennies mount up into dollars," she added, with a wise nod.

The result of her interview with the green-grocer's wife was a promise that Miss Lansing should be allowed to decorate the corner window of the store on the first Saturday in June, and that Mr. Brady would sell any of her flowers that people asked for, reserving a commission of five per cent to pay him for "having the muss around," as he expressed it. With this promise, June set to work, and, indeed, every member of the family helped her to such good purpose that on the eventful Saturday morning when she started from the little cottage at six o'clock, with Bob as helper and Anne bringing up the rear of the procession of three with her arms full of blossoms, there was enough, she felt sure, to decorate Mr. Brady's whole store and Mr. Brady's whole portly person as well.

CHAPTER VIII

FIRST EARNINGS

KNOWING that she must please Mr. Brady first and his customers afterwards, June wisely decided to curb her own desire for an artistic simplicity of arrangement, and to trim the corner window in green-grocery style, but with her own ideas of improvement. Bob's first task was to clear it entirely of its pyramids of tomatoes at eleven cents a can, of its piles of cereals and its free demonstration of a new stove blacking, and to polish the window panes until they glistened. This done, and the floor of it swept clean, June set to work, the others handing her the things that she called for.

Over every inch of floor she scattered fine white sand, and then handfuls of short grass which Bob had clipped the night before; she had it very short so that its wilting during the day might not be noticed as much as if it

had been long. In Grandmamma Warburton's attic they had found a treasure-trove of old baskets, and the quaintest of these Bob had brought to the store. All were brown with age, and one was so large that Anne could sit in it quite comfortably. This June placed on the floor of the window in the middle, and set in it four large crocks full of water; later she filled the crocks with peonies tied in bunches, which were sold for twenty-five cents a bunch; their large, brilliant heads made a splendid mass of color; already Mr. Brady's corner window was transformed. There were two other baskets of a shape so unusual as to puzzle them all, at first; but as soon as the garden began to yield, the use of the large flat baskets was made plain. One of these June piled, in a seeming disorder, yet with a thought to color and form, with Mr. Brady's choicest vegetables — lettuce, long red radishes, delicate greens, early tomatoes and peas and asparagus; and in the other she put shallow pans of water, and filled them

with masses of old-fashioned roses. One basket Bob set in each corner of the window; and then, towards the front, June placed what she thought the most attractive bit of all. She had found an old-fashioned garden hat, deep of crown and very broad of brim, in one of the trunks in the attic; it was still trimmed in faded ribbons. This she filled to overflowing with a mass of all the flowers and sweet herbs that Grandmamma Warburton's garden had to give, and, to crown all, she even had a handful of late lilies of the valley; then, on a few large grape leaves, she massed the contents of two baskets of strawberries, and let a few of the largest tumble out of the garden hat upon the grass and sand. This done, she went outside with Bob and Anne to look at the result.

Anne drew a long-breathed "Oh-h-h!" and June hugged her, and laughed a little.

"It is still the corner window that Mr. Brady loves," she said, "but I do think it is a little unusual. I hope he won't miss the

yellow boxes of cereals too much! And now, Bob," she added, hurrying in again, "let's get the rest in place before he comes. It is nearly seven o'clock."

The final part of it did not take them long, however, for Bob had filled the big stone crocks with water the night before. These they lifted up to the edge of the window, and set along in a row; to cover them, and hide their gray plainness from the street, June spread boughs of leaves that had been in water overnight; and finally, in the jars, bunches of roses and peonies. There were not enough flowers for the end jars, and these they filled with leaves. They had scarcely gathered up the scattered leaves and petals when Mr. Brady appeared in the doorway at the side.

"Well," he asked, with a friendly smile, "going to make your fortune to-day, I suppose?"

"Oh, Mr. Brady," June exclaimed, "please come out to the street and look at your win-

dow! Then you'll see whether we deserve a fortune or not."

They all trooped out, and Mr. Brady stared at the window with a delighted grin, his hands in his pockets. "Well," he said, after his inspection, "it looks right scanty, but I guess there's them that'll like it."

When June got home from the city late that afternoon, Anne met her at the cars and told her that she had been to the store, to see how the flowers were selling, fourteen times that day, and would have gone oftener if Aimée had not kept her home; on the last visit June went with her. The window looked forlorn enough, with half its flowers gone and the basket of fancy vegetables emptied; there were at least half of the flowers left; yet, from her first day, June carried home, with more pride than she had ever felt over anything in her life before, three dollars and twenty cents. The following week she did better, and the week after that nearly as well; so that, when the 1st of September came, she had made,

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out of Grandmamma's garden, twenty-six dollars, and had four of them left when car fare and lessons were paid for, and she felt sufficiently sure of her newly acquired knowledge to seek work.

Gene had come home for two weeks, and had then left them to spend the summer at the shore as tutor for two little boys; and Bob had a new position, of somewhat more dignity than his throne on the milk wagon, which he had got through a most unexpected source, although with good Mr. Shinn's recommendation.

Pauline went off every morning and seemed to like her position in the doctor's office. She said very little at home about her employer, and none of them dreamed of the delightful surprise that was in store for June.

It happened that one day in the early summer Polly awoke with so severe a headache that she could not get up at all; so she asked June to telephone to the Doctor Manly for whom she worked that she should have to

fail him that day. The name was not uncommon, and while it brought back to June's mind her Virginia valley, and Mammy, and Hilary-Hilary lying lame and sick in the best chamber, it did not occur to her that the Doctor Manly who attended Hilary, and who had so much to do with her own destiny, could be "Pauline's doctor," as she always spoke of him, much to Pauline's embarrassment. But the surprise came that very evening, when Aimée was upstairs with Polly and June and Anne were sitting on the steps of the porch in the long twilight. A man came briskly up the street, and in through the little gate, which still slammed and screeched, as of old.

June knew him at once, and in an instant all the years that had passed since she saw him were as if they had never passed at all, and she was a little, dancing, merry child again. She flew down the path towards him with outstretched hands, as sure of her welcome as when she used to drop down upon

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him from the roof of the porch at the dear old Manor, and with as little self-consciousness.

The doctor, however, stopped short in amazement at sight of a young woman racing down the path to meet him. He had come to ask after Miss Percival and he remembered that she had sisters, but before he could think, June was close to him, pounding his arms with her two little closed fists just as she used to do in Virginia! In those days the strong young doctor would lift her up from the ground, and tell her that then she was out of mischief; whereas now he stood as amazed as any man would who found himself suddenly embraced and pommeled by a strange, tall young woman!

"Oh, oh, oh!" June cried; "I'm so glad to see you! Oh, honey doctor, honey doctor, if I'd guessed it was you Polly worked for! Oh-h-h!"

Then the doctor put his hands on her hair, and turned her face towards the pale light

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of the fading sunset. "Why, it is little June!" he said, in a low tone of wonder.

But now June was crying. At the sight of his once familiar face, the pent-up loneliness of years swept over her. She wanted Unc' Tribby and the boys, and above all her dear old Mammy. She wanted them more than anything else in the world. The doctor seemed to understand, for he put his arms about her shoulders as he might have done six years before, led her to the porch steps, and sat down beside her. He said nothing at all until June had had her cry out, but held her hand very gently and kindly, and smiled at Anne's startled face.

"It's perfectly horrid of me," June said, when she could speak at all; "I know it's perfectly horrid of me, but I did n't expect you, and —"

"And I'm not a prince!" the doctor said teasingly.

June laughed through her tears. "No," she said, mopping her eyes; "you are lots

nicer than any mere prince, honey doctor. Oh, please tell me about my Mammy? Don't you see I —" And her tears began again.

"Poor little girl," said the doctor. "I see my coming has made you very homesick! Your Mammy is well, just as well as can be. I had a letter from Ferryville only this week, June, and Torm had been to town to get some liniment from my successor for Unc' Tribby's 'rheumatics,' and said every one at the Manor was well, and Mammy very proud of a new pair of spectacles some one had sent her!"

But news of them only increased poor June's longing to see them. Her head was down on her knees, and she sobbed out, "Oh, I want my Mammy so! I do want her so!"

"Well," the doctor tried to comfort her, "some day you must go back!"

"I don't know how! I have n't a dollar on earth except what I'm making in Mr. Brady's store, and that has to go for lessons and car fare and new soles on my shoes and—and—"

“Oh, come, now!” the doctor laughed, glad to see her returning to the manner of the June he had known; “you’re a young woman of altogether too many needs! You’ve got a few thousand acres of land down there, anyway, and some day — you never can tell what will happen to people who go around finding princes and things, you know — some day you may find yourself as rich as — as — as Miss Cræsus!”

They laughed together at the improbability of it, and talked about the Manor and Ferryville, and the thousand and one things June wanted to know, until at last she stopped with a look of shame.

“Oh!” she cried, “I entirely forgot! You’re Polly’s doctor, and you came out to see how she is, I suppose! Gracious! I’m a disgrace to Mammy’s ‘fotching up’!”

The doctor laughed. “I’m ‘Polly’s doctor,’ am I?” he asked.

June nodded. “Of course,” she said; “but she’ll just have to divide you now, because

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you belonged to me first! Oh, and Polly's poor head is better, and she will be quite able to go to work to-morrow, thank you very much!"

It was the first of the doctor's many visits to the little cottage out of town. He had much to tell June about Ferryville, and how he had saved all he could from his small earnings there to come to the city to begin his practice in a larger sphere; and he even had news from Hilary Warburton, with whom he had always kept up an irregular correspondence.

He soon became their general family adviser and friend. It was through him that Bob got the long-coveted place in the bank, and it was one of his patients who engaged Gene as tutor for the summer. The girls sometimes spread their supper table in Grandmamma Warburton's little garden, and often the doctor was their guest. He offered to help June find employment, but proud and self-confident in her lately ac-

quired art, she wanted to do that without assistance.

It was while she was going into the city every day with Polly, answering advertisements and visiting agencies, that Aimée began to take a larger share of the family burden. Being the beauty-lover that she was, she kept the little cottage neat and pretty, and the supper table as bright and dainty as any on fashionable Forest Hill. Polly thought the care of the house was quite enough for her, but it may be that the joy of work felt by the three bread-winners was contagious, or it may be that Aimée's rather selfish nature was getting from adversity the stimulus it needed. However that may be, the girls and Bob were greatly surprised one evening to find, in the middle of the supper table, a large flat dish of what seemed at first glance to be artificial roses: it was June's sharp eyes that first discovered what they really were.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, leaning over the

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pretty dishful; "oh! Maysie Percival! What on earth have you been making! Why, it is n't anybody's birthday!"

Aimée laughed, and blushed a little. "I've been experimenting," she said.

"Experimenting!" cried Polly. "I should think you had! Why, Aimée, it's the prettiest thing I ever saw!"

"Is it a cake?" Bob asked, while Anne danced up and down and clapped her hands; she was delighted to get a chance to explain.

"Yes, it is a cake!" she cried. "It is a lot of little tiny round cakes. Aimée cut it out of a big sheet of cake with one of Grand-mamma's smallest, littlest glasses, and then she made some pink icing and covered them all over with that, and then she squeezed some more pink icing out of a cunning little cornucopia, and made little wiggles all around the edge. See them? Then she took some sugared rose-leaves that she bought with the money she had saved up for her new pair of silk gloves, and she stuck five little leaves on

top with some more pink icing, and she cut little darling, cunning green leaves out of a piece of citron, and then she put little yellow anise-seed in the middle;—and did you ever in all your life see anything so darling and lovely? I do think they ought to be for a queen's birthday — don't you?"

The others were quite speechless with admiration, until Polly turned to Aimée with a slightly reproachful air.

"They are little works of art, Maysie! But what are we to do with them? They are too pretty to eat — we ought to have had a party ourselves, in their honor!"

Aimée shook her head. "No, Pollykins," she said; "I could n't let you eat them! I made some two days ago as an experiment, and took them to the Woman's Exchange, and to-day I got an order for four dozen, at a dollar a dozen, and these are to go to Mrs. Winton on the Hill for some sort of a party to-night. Will you help me carry them up, after supper, Bobby? They said at the Ex-

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change that I'd certainly have a steady demand for them."

So it came about that June was, after all, the last of them to begin to earn a regular contribution towards the family funds. But her time for that was to come.

CHAPTER IX

LOOKING FOR WORK

JUNE had not taken lessons in what the doctor called "the gentle art of being secretary" at any of the various business schools, but from a young woman who had been one of Mr. Percival's co-workers in his charitable labors, and who offered to teach June for less than any of the regular schools charged. Miss Wynne had learned shorthand and typewriting as a preliminary to newspaper work, and as she was now on a morning paper, her day of work rarely began before late afternoon, and she could give June her lessons in the mornings.

The arrangement was pleasant enough for them both, yet when the time came for June to seek a position, she almost wished that she had gone to a regular business school. There, she knew, she would have been in the way of securing some sort of work as soon as

she had learned enough, since many people, especially those who could not pay large salaries, applied to the schools for young women who would begin their business careers at a few dollars a week, and count upon the experience as part payment.

But when June felt that she knew enough to begin, she could not count upon even as much help as that: she must find her place for herself. She remembered what Bob had said the day he came home with the news of his first "job" — that it was easier to secure a place after one had had any experience at all; for wherever she went she was met with the same question, "And what experience have you had?"

At first she answered the advertisements of what seemed really desirable places, but when the last of the money she had made through Mr. Brady was gone, and she had to borrow car fare of Polly, she went also wherever there seemed the least likelihood of securing a place. Day after day she came

home tired and discouraged; but, for the sake of the others, she tried to get what fun she could from her experiences. It was not until she had hunted for over three weeks, however, that at last the day came when she returned jubilant.

“Well,” she cried, as soon as she was inside the house, “I am a full-fledged secretary at last!”

Aimée looked up from her mending and smiled. “I’m so glad!” she said, as June leaned over and kissed her.

Aimée was becoming very motherly these days. The care of the house and her own pretty work were rapidly adding a sweet dignity to her beauty and grace, and the others were beginning to turn to her more and more, as if she were really the oldest, and not merely the stay-at-home young *Hausfrau*. She touched June’s flushed cheek, and put her work down. “Come out to the kitchen and tell me all about it, honey, while I make you some lemonade,” she said.

So June perched on Aimée's spotless table, and told her good news.

"It's the West Side Realty Company," she said, with evident pride in the resounding title. "They are opening an office to sell real estate, and I am to stay in the office and see people while the two men are out. Mr. Abrams and Mr. Quickly, their names are; and while I suppose they are not quite what you'd call gentlemen, I am sure they mean well."

But Aimée shook her head. "Oh, June," she said, "I don't believe Polly will like that arrangement very much. Do you mean that you are to be in the office all alone, to see whoever comes in?"

"Why, yes," June replied. "What's wrong with that?"

"Wait until Polly comes," replied Aimée. "And anyhow, darling, it is fine that you have a place, after trotting your poor little feet nearly off!"

When Pauline heard of Mr. Abrams and

Mr. Quickly, and the new realty company on a side street, she was no more enthusiastic than was Aimée. In fact, she was even more disapproving than Aimée had expected.

"Oh, June," she said, "I don't think you can possibly do that! Why, you don't know who might come in while you were alone! And I think the business sounds rather doubtful!"

June's eyes were suspiciously bright. "Polly!" she cried, "it is n't like you to be so suspicious! You have n't the least reason for being so! I know those men are not like — like Uncle or honey doctor or Hilary-Hilary; but then, you can't expect every one to be as nice as they are! They were very polite."

"How much are they to pay you?" was the first question Bob asked.

Then, June felt, she could truly triumph over them. "I am to have ten dollars a week!" she said, with her head held very proudly.

They did not receive the news as she expected, however. Bob and Pauline looked at each other for a long moment, and then Bob said:—

“Something queer there. Brand-new real estate men don’t pay over four, if they are really just starting out in legitimate business, June-bug. Better steer clear of your West Side Realty thingumbob.”

June, however, would not heed their warnings, which she believed altogether unjustified, and at which she was not a little hurt and angry: she set out on the next morning determined to prove them wrong. They refrained from any questions when she came home that night, and tired June went to bed early. It was not until two days later that she admitted their wisdom, and then she did so in the most unexpected way.

Anne was at school, and Aimée busy in the kitchen with her rose cakes, when June came bursting through the door, sat down on a nicely buttered tin which Aimée had left on

a kitchen chair, and resting her arms on the table, buried her face in them and began to sob. Aimée was thoroughly alarmed, but it was not for some moments that she got the story of it from poor June.

“They are horrid, horrid people,” she said. “I never saw such horrible men; I did n’t know there could be any like them! Oh, Maysie, they are the most dreadful, dreadful cheats! There is n’t any Company at all, and nobody comes to their office much; but if any one does come in, those dreadful men hide in the inside room, and I have to see them. And every one who comes in is very angry, because they say they have been cheated. I don’t understand it very well, but those two men have a little piece of land somewhere which they are selling; they get people to pay them, and then the people seem to find out that the land is all marsh or something, and not a bit as they told them. Some of the people were very rude to me — as if I had anything to do with it! And to-

day a queer old man in a long black coat came in, and when he found out I did n't know much about it, he called me — oh, dreadfully rude things, because I was working there. I cried when he left, because I don't think he had so very much money, you know! But when he was gone," — and June stood up with clenched hands and pale face, — "that — that — ugh — Mr. Abrams came in and — oh, Aimée, he actually patted me on the shoulder and tried to tell me not to mind, and said it was all a matter of business; and he called me — he called me 'my dear' — and I took my hat and my jacket and I ran away just as fast as I could! And I shall never, never, never go back again, either! And I wish you'd scrub my shoulder with the scrubbing-brush!"

She was sobbing in Aimée's arms, and her cousin tried to comfort her. "You did just right, poor dear," she said. "I know Pauline and Bob were afraid those men or some one who came into the office might be rude to

you; it did not seem possible that the business could be honest, somehow."

"The very first day I was there a girl who works on the next floor said they took me on because I looked like a lady. I suppose I ought to have told Polly that right away, but I just could n't bear to."

Aimée laughed. "Well, never mind," she said. "I don't think she will hold it up against you!"

When Polly heard the tale of June's misadventures, however, she insisted upon telling Doctor Manly. But when their friend heard of it all for the first time, Polly no more escaped a lecture than June herself.

"Any one with any experience whatever," the doctor said, walking up and down and gesticulating until Anne buried her face in the sofa pillows to keep from laughing aloud, — "any one would have known that two impossible men do not engage a young, inexperienced girl, a lady, at ten dollars a week, on the understanding that she is to see their

clients while they disappear, unless they are crooked. I shall write to Warburton to-night, as he is your next of kin in this country, and you don't trust me. There must be an end to this ridiculous running about the streets looking for work."

June's cheeks were flushed, and Polly looked very grave. "I think June will follow your advice, Doctor Manly, if you will tell her what is best to do," she said. "And I think you ought to understand that she was only trying her best to help us all, and that she was not merely trying to please herself."

June squeezed Pauline's hand, but she looked bravely up into the doctor's angry eyes. "I was trying to please myself just a little," she confessed. "I did n't think it would be hard to find a place in such a big city, and I wanted to do it alone. Nobody had ever told me there were people like Mr. Abrams and Mr. Quickly in the world. — But I know better now. I won't do my own way any more."

The doctor's set face relaxed, and his eyes softened again as he looked at her. "Poor little June," he said.

But June would not have that.

"I don't think I'm poor little June at all," she declared. "I ought to have known better, that's all!"

"No," replied the doctor. "You could not have been expected to know better. There are hundreds, yes, and thousands, of girls like you who go to the cities every year looking for work; and there are hundreds of Mr. Abrams and Mr. Quicklys and Mr. Otherthings. Sometimes the girls don't take their hats and coats and run away. Sometimes they stay on in such places until they, like the men, can tolerate crooked dealings. Sometimes they go around until they wear out all their shoes and *have* to go back to wherever they came from. And those, let me tell you, are the most fortunate ones. Sometimes they stay and starve it out, and sometimes they so far succeed that they reach the

luxury of a fourth-floor-front bedroom in a boarding-house, instead of a back hall-room. Why, *why*, WHY don't you stay at home, little June? Why don't all the others stay at home?"

"I suppose a good many of them think it is easier to starve, after they have tried not to, than to starve without making an effort," said June, with her hands clasped under her chin in the old way the doctor remembered.

"Then a good part of the fault lies with those of us who know the city's dangers," he said, shaking a long forefinger at her, to Anne's delight, "and who don't tell you girls plainly enough what they are. If I had the power, I'd make a law that every girl who came into the city should have to prove before entering it that she had a positive means of immediately earning a living, or sufficient money to live on, or else that she should be turned back and not allowed to enter."

Pauline's arm was about June very tightly, but June herself did not seem to attach great

importance to the doctor's words. "It's just because it's me that you talk that way," she said. "I'll get along all right, honey doctor!"

The doctor fairly groaned. "Oh, little June, that is just what they all say," he cried.

Before he went home that evening, he had exacted a promise from June, though not without Polly's help, that she would not go again into the city alone to look for work, nor take anything without first consulting him. But two days later he came out with an offer which June was glad to accept. An aged and learned member of the hospital staff was writing a book on diseases of the chest, and he wanted a young person of intelligence — or, as he expressed it, "Some one who can spell in three languages" — to copy it for him, in preparation for the publishers. It proved to be a ponderous work, and June had all she could do to decipher the tiny handwriting of the learned man, to verify his quotations in the big volumes in his library, and to make sure of her Latin and Ger-

man spelling. But she gave all her attention to the work, and at the end of four months had the satisfaction of writing the last page of it in the pleasant consciousness that she had done her best. The professor, as he was usually called, had a way of looking at her over his glasses curiously, intently, much as if she had been a newly discovered insect. When, with a little sigh, she handed him the last page, he permitted himself a rare smile.

During all the four months in his library he had not spoken one personal word to her. Therefore, June fairly jumped when he said, "Well, young lady, want to be a doctor?"

In spite of her amazement she laughed. "No, sir," she said. "That would never do for me, never in the world!"

The old professor smiled grimly. "Why not?" he asked.

"Well, doctor, since I have been copying your book I've imagined that I had every disease you write about! So, you see, if I

tried to be a doctor, what an awful time I'd be bound to have!"

The old man laughed. "I've imagined you were not greatly enjoying it," he said.

June started to speak, but he held up his hand.

"I do not mean to say that your work has not been well done, my child," he said. "On the contrary, it has been satisfactory in every way. But you are not meant for this sort of thing. I think, if you will allow an old man to say so, that you are meant for open air, the sea, or the hill-tops. Why not do something out-of-doors?"

June's eyes looked very wistful. "I'm afraid this is all I know how to do," she said. "And we just have to have the money!"

The professor was silent for a moment or two, and June could look at him with wide-opened eyes of wonder. During the time she had been coming to his house, she had learned that he had no children, and that his wife had died while only a young slip of a girl.



"I'M AFRAID THIS IS ALL I KNOW HOW TO DO.
AND WE JUST HAVE TO HAVE THE MONEY!"

His servants were either afraid of him or else regarded him as a sort of overgrown baby who had not been well enough trained to keep its things in order. She knew that his patients and many of the younger doctors loved him; now she was beginning to understand how that could be. It was really the first time he had seemed to be human.

“Well, my dear, it has been very pleasant to see you here,” the old gentleman said, at length. “I hope you will come in and have luncheon with an old man sometimes. I have often wished that I might have a little granddaughter like you.”

June went towards him impetuously and held out her hand. “Oh, doctor, you are very nice to me! I — I did n’t know you could be so very nice!” The doctor smiled, with an odd twist of his lips, and June hastily added, “I borrowed a grandmother once!”

The old professor patted her hand. “Then perhaps you will borrow a grandfather, some day,” he said. “But first, I hope you will

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become better acquainted with me. My friend Manly tells me that you have several sisters?"

June explained, and told him their names.

"Now, I want you to bring them every one to supper with me on Sunday evening," the doctor said. Before she left, he made her promise to do so, and June went home happy in the thought that, although she was out of work again, she had, at least, made a new friend.

But the kind old doctor's Sunday tea-party did not take place; for when June reached home Aimée met her at the door with eyes red from weeping.

"Oh, June, June darling," she cried, putting her head on June's shoulder and sobbing, "Anne is ill, very ill!"

CHAPTER X

THE EMERALD CROSS

"ANNE is ill, very ill!"

They were hard words to greet June, coming home tired and out of work again, having just finished the last of the old professor's book. All the way home that day she comforted herself that she had, at least, made a new friend; yet everything but those words of ill omen went out of her mind at once, when Aimée put her head on her shoulder and sobbed out the bad news.

At first June was too shocked to speak; then, gathering courage, she said, "But, Maysie, she can't be very sick! Why, she was at breakfast this morning!"

"Oh, yes," cried Aimée, "she is, she is. She was too sick, she said, to go to school; she just wanted to sit on my lap. And her forehead was so hot that after a time I telephoned Polly. Doctor Manly has gone to

Virginia because his mother is ill, you know, but Polly came right out with Doctor Green. And, oh, June, it is scarlet fever, and our baby is already very, very ill!"

Aimée sobbed, and June could not speak. She remembered the last time there had been an illness in the family; — was it to be little Anne, this time? She felt as if she were choking, and her eyes filled with tears, but with Aimée already weeping, she knew that she must be brave for them all.

"Please don't cry, Maysie honey," she begged. "Please don't. I've heard that scarlet fever is n't so very bad — necessarily."

Aimée shook her head. "It is as bad as can be," she said, "and Anne is very sick already. And none of us have had it," she added, to complete her tale of woe.

"I am not afraid," said June.

"It is n't that," Aimée said, looking at her reproachfully. "I hope you did n't think, June Lansing, that I am afraid! But — don't

you see — it means that the house will have to be quarantined?”

“What do you mean?” asked June.

“Polly and Anne are up in the little back room, because that is farthest away from the rest of the house,” Aimée said. “They are shut off with sheets wet with disinfectants hanging in front of the doors, and all that. The doctor does not think we are likely to take the fever, if we keep plenty of fresh air in the house, and are careful. — You and Bob are not to go upstairs at all, because you have to go to work; I told him that we simply had to do that.”

Poor June sat down, and looked at Aimée with a blank face. “Oh, Maysie,” she said, after a moment, “we spend every penny we make, as it is, and we’ll need ever so much more when there is sickness in the house.”

“Yes, I have thought of that,” said Aimée. “I shall try to make the cakes as usual, but I am afraid I shall not have very much time. It’s a good thing you and Bob can keep on.”

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June looked very forlorn. "But I can't, Aimée," she said. "I finished the doctor's work to-day, and he has no more for me now. I've brought home my last six dollars to-night!"

They were very anxious days that followed. Kind Mrs. Brady had come, as soon as she saw the red sign on the front door, to ask Bob to stay at her house until the danger at home was entirely past, and they all decided that Bob should go, although it was strongly against his will. There were ways to be devised of getting food up to Polly and of burning whatever came from the sick-room; in fact, there was so much to be done that Aimée said, after the second day, that she was glad June could stay at home to help. Doctor Manly heard of their trouble, and an anxious letter came for Pauline every day; but he wrote that it would be impossible for him to leave his mother for a while, perhaps even for some weeks. Many old friends of

the family, who had known them in town, but whom they had scarcely seen since Mr. Percival's death, came or sent messages, but many more were afraid of the contagion.

To add to the anxiety, their garden, of course, yielded nothing during the winter, and everything had to be bought; so before many days the time came when Aimée and June had to discuss the troubled question of their finances.

"Bob's money will pay for the milk and eggs for Anne, and the food for Pauline. But, you know, we are charging things at the drug store now, and we shall have ever so much more before we see Anne well again," Aimée said, with tears in her eyes.

June had been thinking of it — or so it seemed to her — every minute of every day. She was glad to help Aimée, and indeed she felt that she was now necessary at home, yet, meanwhile, she was without any paying work, while each day their need of money became more pressing. Anne required a great

deal, and if Pauline were to keep her strength to withstand the contagion, she, too, must have good food. So on the day following their talk, June went into town, again to begin her rounds of the various agencies. On the way home she stopped at the professor's house, to tell him why they could not accept his invitation for Sunday evening. The kindly old man was all interest.

"Shall I come out to see the little girl? Would it make you feel more sure?" he asked June, patting her hand.

"Oh, no, sir," she replied; "Doctor Green seems to know all about it."

"Then, may I send out some good things for all of you? Let me send out the tea-party!"

June smiled with pleasure, and as she was leaving, the old doctor called her back.

"My child," he said, looking really very much embarrassed, "don't you think a borrowed grandfather might — er — might be allowed to — er — render a little assistance?"

He had his pocketbook in his hand as he spoke, but June flushed and drew back. No Lansing and no Percival had ever accepted alms; and June was too young to realize that it is sometimes as fine to receive as to give. "Oh, no, sir!" she exclaimed. "Oh, no! Please!"

The doctor still looked at her searchingly. "Not to please me?" he asked.

But June still shook her head, and there was nothing for the kind old gentleman to do but resign himself to her decision.

"Well," he said, "if you were really my little granddaughter, I'd know what to do with you! But tell me, have you any other employment?"

June told him that she had not, and left him with a promise to see him again the next week.

But a week can be a long time, when anxiety presses, and when pocketbooks are rapidly flattening. Each day June went to town, and each day came out tired and dis-

heartened. Then on the sixth day from her visit to the doctor there came to pass what they had all dreaded so much that not one of them had had the courage to suggest it.

Doctor Green came downstairs from his third visit that day, with a very long face.

"Miss Percival," he said to Aimée, while June sat with her hands clasped over her frightened heart, "I shall have to send out a trained nurse this afternoon."

For a long moment neither of the girls could speak, and the doctor stood with his eyes on the small black bag he carried. Then at last Aimée managed to gasp, —

"Pauline?"

The doctor nodded, and met her eyes pityingly. "Yes, I fear she is to have the fever also. But please do not be alarmed. The little girl will be out of danger, I trust, in a few days now. Your sister is very brave, and I hope she will have a light case."

June slipped from the room. And, when

the doctor had gone, poor Aimée threw herself face down upon the sofa, and cried bitterly. Anne and Polly! The family joy first, and now the family strength!

For the first time in six years, June, for some inexplicable reason, began to feel herself an outsider, not a real member of the family. It may have been because she felt herself so helpless, or it may have been that her fright and anxiety affected her strangely; but when she went up to her own room, the same little room she had had in Grandmamma Warburton's day, she was more lonely than she had ever been in all her life before. She had loved these cousins so dearly, and they had taken her in as one of themselves so generously! Yet now, in their hour of greatest need, she was so helpless to return any of their goodness, so useless, such a burden! It was very false reasoning, but people in distress will often reason falsely, and June was young, and no wiser than any one else would have been.

Aimée did not call her at their usual supper time. June heard the nurse come, and go down the hall towards the room at the back; she heard her speak to Aimée, and she realized that her cousin must think she had gone out. Her heart was so heavy that its very weight kept back the tears. She watched the sunset fade and the stars come out in the cold night. She heard the doctor come again, and go, and she heard Aimée answer Bob's nightly whistle, and tell him the bad news from the door; yet still she did not want to leave her room. After a while she lit a candle. Grandmamma Warburton's house had no "modern improvements," and June loved candlelight, for it reminded her of Oakwood Manor, and the big bare rooms where the shadows drew back into the corners when the candles were lighted or a new log was put on the fire.

Then she drew from under the bed a little old trunk, the same she had brought from Virginia, and began to look over her treas-

ures. What girl has not, when her heart was troubled, turned to her little treasured mementos, so worthless to all but herself, for comfort!

There was the little plaid dress Mammy had made for her to travel in; there was the green parasol with its funny little pinked ruffles, once the joy of her childish heart, that Hilary-Hilary had almost smashed in his tumble down the mountain-side. She vaguely wondered where he was, and wished that he had not been too busy during all these years to come to see them at least once. There was the little red pocketbook he had sent her on that birthday, the day of her arrival at the Percivals'; the telegram was still within it. And then, in a little satin box, were her dearest of dear things: a small brown photograph of her handsome father, and one of her mother; a ring made of a horseshoe nail, that Mammy had given her as a parting souvenir; and the string of little pearls and the cross set with green stones. Polly had

given her the cross and chain, after Mr. Percival's death, saying nothing whatever about it except that her father had directed her to give it back to June's keeping.

Now, June held the cross in her hand, wondering about all the other Juliets who had worn it, turning it over to read the worn letters on its back, dreaming about the many things it recalled or suggested. Then, suddenly, she started up with a little cry. What if those stones should be real? Why had Mammy and her grandmother cautioned her to be so careful with it, to keep it always, if it were not of value? What if they were real! Emeralds! The sick-room upstairs, the daily increasing bills — and emeralds!

She was older now than she was when she used to wear it at Lansing Manor; she knew more of the value of precious stones, and in the windows of the great jewelers in town she had seen emeralds; surely the sets in her cross were very like those! If they were, indeed, precious stones, and not bits of green

glass, she knew that they must be worth money. But even with her additional years and all her lately acquired experience, June did not dream of their real value.

With the cross in her hand she started towards the door, to talk it over with Aimée. But then she realized that if the jewel proved to be imitation, Aimée, if told of her purpose to sell it, would be disappointed, and there was no need of adding to her burdens. So she laid the cross and chain away, and went down to say good-night.

Aimée was lying on the sofa fully dressed, yet fast asleep; so June crept back upstairs to bed, only to lie awake half the night, full of impatience for the morrow, when she might go to the city to try her fortune in another way.

The next morning Aimée was too depressed and preoccupied to notice June's excitement, and June was glad to escape questions. On the way to town she remembered having noticed over a shop on a small downtown

street, a sign, which stated, "OLD GOLD AND SILVER BOUGHT AND SOLD"; and it was there that she decided to go first.

It proved to be a dingy little place. The proprietor was even more dingy than his store, and his manner was bored and weary. He listened with a mournful expression while June said a word or two in explanation of her errand. Then he took the cross and chain, turned them over and over, stuck a little black-rimmed glass in his eye, examined them more closely; and then, still without speaking, looked up and stared at June.

"What can you give me for them?" June asked, when she thought she had stood his scrutiny long enough.

"What you want?" returned the man.

"I — I — hardly know. I want to sell it, for as much as I can get!"

Pauline had always declared that June had no bargaining sense, and had never allowed her to go shopping alone. Now June was dolefully aware that she was doing very

badly, but she was totally unprepared for the answer the man gave her.

He shoved the cross and chain towards her across the dirty glass of the counter. "This ain't no fence," he said, and turned wearily away.

For a moment June was too amazed to speak. But when it became clear to her that the man was being intentionally rude, the pride of the Lansings arose within her, and her cheeks flushed hotly.

"You will be so kind as to explain just what you mean," she said, and was immediately proud of acquitting herself so well; she was sure that even Polly could not have been more dignified and grand.

"I said this ain't no fence," the man repeated, speaking over his shoulder. "I dunno whether you've been put up to it or not, but I know I ain't going to buy no such stones as them. It stands to reason they ain't been come by in no honest way."

June's eyes flashed. "Honest way!" she

exclaimed. "How dare you say such a thing to me? I have told you that the cross is mine, my own, and that I wish to dispose of it!"

"Reckon you do," said the man. "But I don't get caught twicet. A lady's maid brung a di'mond ring in here last fall, an' said it was her'n; and then the p'lice got me up for receiving stolen goods! I don't receive no stolen goods, 'cause, as I said before, I ain't no fence; an' you better take that right along outer here, before I get you into trouble!"

So saying, he went into a small dark place back of his store, and June could only grope her way out to the street, half-blind with tears. She had never felt so deeply ashamed in her life. "Oh," she said aloud, when she was safely outside, "he took me for a thief, for a *thief*!"

She found it impossible to restrain her sobs, although she knew she was attracting the attention of the people on the street. She made her way towards the crossing, and

there a hand was laid on her arm, and a kindly voice said, —

“Lost anything, Miss?”

June shrank away from the man at first, but he opened his coat a little and showed a policeman’s badge. “Don’t have to be scared of me, Miss,” he said. “Anything I can do for you?”

While he spoke, he urged her gently towards the doorway of a small dry-goods shop, and stood in front of her, shielding her from the gaze of the curious, until she was somewhat herself again; then he repeated his questions.

“No, thank you very much,” said June. “I have n’t lost anything, but perhaps you can help me. I want,” — she looked up at him appealingly through wet lashes, and with a very red face, — “I want to find one of those places where they — I think they give you — money — on jewelry and things.”

The officer looked as amazed as a man can, but responded at once. “Pawn shop?” he

asked. "Sure! I'll take you to one, and see ye get a square deal, Miss. Though," he added, "you had n't ought to be hunting the likes of that, a real lady like you."

When they reached another door even dingier than the one from which she had just fled, June thought the officer remained outside. She showed her cross at once to the man behind the counter, and asked, "What will you pay me for it?"

But the small dark person who examined it shook his head, and handed it back to her even more quickly than the first man had done. "I can't gif you vat you vand for dot," he said, waving his hands.

June was about to take up the jewel, when the officer, who was evidently standing behind her, reached over her shoulder, and laid his hand upon it. "What's the matter with it, Levi?" he asked.

The little dark man rolled his black eyes towards the ceiling and shrugged his shoulders. "Der emerald! Und der pearl!" he said.



"I CAN'T GIF YOU VOT YOU VAND FOR DOT"

The other man was, in his turn, examining June's ill-fated cross and chain. "Well, Miss," he said finally, "I guess I got to ask you to explain how you come by this here. I don't like to hurt your feelin's, but it's a mighty fine article o' jewelry for a young lady like you to be carrying around."

At this last insult, although spoken so kindly, poor June's courage and pride both forsook her, and she hid her face in her hands and wept bitterly. But, through her sobs, she managed to tell the officer her story.

The man called Levi grunted when he heard it, and said, "Ain't dot so, now?" and began to chuckle. But the officer was too keen an observer of the human face not to have some faith in June's story.

"Do you know any one in town who can identify you, Miss?" he asked, still respectfully.

"Oh for Doctor Manly!" thought June. Then she remembered that she had almost

borrowed a grandfather, and gave the professor's address.

The officer looked greatly relieved, and asked June to take her cross and go to the professor's house at once, saying that he would follow her, but would not seem to go with her, because he would not annoy her more than was necessary.

The amazement of the professor, roused from his studies by his former secretary on such an errand, may better be guessed than described; but he indignantly made short work of dismissing the policeman, and then insisted upon June's staying to luncheon.

During that morning the professor learned a great deal about an old plantation in Virginia, and Unc' Tribby and Mammy, Torm and the chillen, as June still called them, and also about many other people and things; — in fact, he learned almost all that June could tell him, for in her great relief after the troubles of the morning, she was so excited and happy that, as Mammy used to tell her,

her "tongue was a wiggle-waggin' both sides to once."

After luncheon the doctor took her in his brougham to the enormous marble store of the greatest jeweler in the city. "For," he said, "if you are determined to sell your own grandmother's emeralds, my dear, you may as well get what they are worth."

June had often peeped in the windows at the jewelry and the splendid silver plate, and she would have liked to see everything inside the store. But at a word from the doctor they were led to a small back room handsomely furnished, and there June, for the third time, showed her cross.

The man who first looked at it called in another; they examined the stones with glasses, and finally asked permission to remove them from the setting.

"That can scarcely be necessary," the doctor interposed before June could reply, "since Miss Lansing will not sell unless she gets her price."

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But that suggestion did not seem to please the two men.

“It is unusual to find six perfectly matched emeralds of the size of these stones,” said the elder of them. “This house is always willing to pay a good price for gems, and I think the lady will be satisfied with our offer.” Then he named a price, and June turned pale.

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CHAPTER XI

THE GREAT MAN'S SECRETARY

WHEN she and the professor left the big jewelry store, June was trembling, and her face was very pale. It seemed to her that she had suddenly become an heiress. She had heard the men arrange the price with the professor, and it was to be supposed that she had agreed to it; but she had no recollection of having spoken. Yet, when she was in the professor's brougham again, she knew that she no longer held her emerald cross, but only a folded piece of paper with some wonderful words written upon it, and some unbelievable figures. The professor looked at her, and smiled.

"Well, young lady, are you satisfied?" he asked.

"Is it — is it really this much?" June asked, and opened her check again.

The professor laughed. "Yes, it is, really.

Four thousand dollars is a great deal of money, but your emeralds were very large, and, as Mr. Creeve said, perfectly matched, and almost without flaws. Your cross was a very splendid piece of jewelry, Miss Juliet."

June drew a long breath. "I don't believe any one in my family ever had as much money as this at one time since the world began," she said.

"Some one must have bought your cross, however, in the first place," the professor reminded her.

"Well, doctor," she replied, "I certainly never dreamed of being as rich as this, never in all my whole long life!"

She often reverted to her childish phrases when excited, and the professor had already come to delight in them.

"Oh, I can't wait to get home!" she cried, her eyes very bright.

The journey back on the cars did, indeed, seem very long to her. More than one person looked at her curiously; wonder, joy, impa-

tience, could be read by any one in her mobile face; and although at all times June was a pleasing person to look upon, to-day she was perhaps more nearly beautiful than ever before. Happiness and relief from care tell very quickly upon any young girl's face, and June was apt to grieve more deeply, rejoice more intensely, than those of more quiet natures.

She ran all the way from the car to the little cottage gate, and when she opened the door her heart was pounding so that she could only gasp out, —

“Aimée! Oh, Maysie!”

But before she could say more than that, another emotion overwhelmed her; it was always April weather with June. The sight of poor Aimée's drawn, pale, anxious face was altogether more than June could stand. She threw her arms about her cousin's neck much as Aimée had done on the fateful day when little Anne was first taken ill, and it was some minutes before Aimée gathered the truth from her, or even that her news was

good. It was too incredible to be believed at first. Then, when June and she had read and re-read the wonderful check, the first thought that crossed their minds was that Pauline must be told. Both knew that nothing could be a better tonic for their ill and worried Polly than tidings of such wonderful good fortune. To be relieved at last of all immediate thought for their future! It was too good to appear true, and yet Pauline must be made to understand the truth of it.

The Percivals had never been given to confiding in strangers. To give their message to the nurse would be to make her aware of the state of their finances, or at least that they had been anxious about them: they decided that it would never do to send word to Polly through any stranger; to write would be equally impossible, for they knew she was not allowed to use her eyes at all.

"I am going up my very own self!" cried June. "I am not afraid of any old fever; and if I do get it we can afford any number of

nurses now! I'm going right upstairs and tell Pollykins!"

She was actually starting, but Aimée clasped her gayly, and they struggled playfully together with the first laughter the little house had heard for three weeks. "You must not, you must not, June," Aimée was saying, to June's constantly repeated, "I am going up, I am, I am!" when their front door was opened unceremoniously, and both girls turned quickly to face — Doctor Manly.

They stared at one another for a moment, without finding a word to say. Only the day before Doctor Manly's letter had said that he must remain in Virginia for many days longer; yet here he was, and looking as white as an apparition.

He took off his hat, and leaned back against the side of the doorway as if he had not strength to stand upright.

"Is she — is she —" he began; then he turned his face away from them, and June was the first to understand.

“Oh, poor honey doctor,” she cried, taking his hand in both of hers. “Don’t be so frightened! She is going to get well, honey doctor! Polly is going to get well!”

They stood, after that, in a somewhat embarrassed silence, until the doctor turned and put his arm about June’s shoulders, as he had once before. “Little June! My little friend!” he said.

The situation was altogether too intense for June. She swallowed hard once or twice, then pulled him into the sitting-room, where Aimée had darted after June’s first words to the doctor. She answered his many questions about the illness of the two dear ones upstairs, and then, with more and more incredulous questions from him, she told of her own small fortune so wonderfully recovered.

“So they were ‘really truly emeralds,’ after all!” Doctor Manly exclaimed. “Warburton told me of that cross, and he also told me, what you had been kept in ignorance of, that Mammy knew it was of great value.

Your grandmother told her, I believe, that the cross was to be used to send you to school if no other way was found for you. But evidently Mammy did not know how to go about it, and Mr. Percival did not want to use it."

"Oh, did Uncle know about it, do you think?" June asked.

"I am sure he must have known," the doctor replied.

June's eyes were full of tears when she turned to Aimée. "Just think of that, Maysie!" she said. "Uncle knew I had all that money, yet he spent on me just what he spent on the rest of you! Oh!" she cried, "I am so glad I thought of trying to sell it! I am so glad to have the money now, when we need it so much!"

Then they dressed the doctor in the white sheet and cap that must be worn over his woolen clothing if he would visit the sick ones; and when he came down again (June told Aimée afterwards that she wanted to

hug him when she saw how happy he looked), the heiress, as Bob persisted in calling her after he heard of the sale of the cross, described her adventures of the morning. It was not for many and many a day afterwards that she remembered how Doctor Manly made a note in his little red pocketbook of the place she had sold her cross, its price, and all the other details of the transaction.

It may have been the relief in their affairs, or the sudden return of Doctor Manly, who had hurried North on receipt of the telegram he had received from his friend Doctor Green, in accordance with the promise he had exacted that he should be sent for at once if Pauline were in danger; but whatever the cause, Polly's case was a very light one, and she was strong again long before little Anne.

Their baby — as they loved to call her, somewhat to Anne's disgust — was now nine years old; she had never been large or particularly robust, but after the fever left, and she

was able to be down with them all once more, it seemed as though she grew more and more frail. June watched her with solicitude, and one day she tucked her arm through Doctor Manly's, and led him down through the garden, dreary in its winter sleep, for a consultation. The result of it was that she and Pauline, with little Anne, took a part of the money which seemed to have come as a healing gift and set sail on a long voyage to the islands in the South. Anne grew stronger there, and although she was never again quite as healthy as she had been before her illness, she was well enough, before the summer passed, to take part in the life of the household as she had before.

It was a happy summer for all of them. Eugenia stayed at home during the three months of her vacation; for although she was graduated that June, she was to leave them in the fall to begin her life of teaching. June still loved to tease her when she would go off with her books, and Gene's near-sighted

blue eyes still looked at June with the wonder of a naturalist at a new variety of creature.

In the fall Bob, too, came into his heart's desire; for with the consent and advice of the doctor and of June's friend and adopted grandfather, the professor, who was always consulted now on anything that concerned her, June insisted upon his leaving the bank and going to the university that was the goal of his cherished ambition.

"Of course you must go, Bobby," she declared. "How can you count a few dollars or so, that came as easily as mine did, against your college education? Do take a sensible view of it!"

So there were formal papers of loan drawn up between them, at which the professor smiled when he read them, and Bob received from June's hands the amount of his first year's tuition; and it may be ventured, perhaps, that no happier freshman ever went cheerfully through his hazing!

Early in the following autumn the professor sent for June.

"Well, Cinderella," he said — he had all sorts of names for her — "how would your ladyship like to fill the post of confidential ambassador to the court of King Cræsus?"

June laughed. "I'd rather be hairdresser at the palace of Queen Mab!" she replied. "But as I can't, what do you happen to really and truly mean, professor?"

"Have you ever heard of the particular King Cræsus who in this life is called Mr. Robert Atterbury?"

June put her head on one side and considered. "He's something or other in something, is n't he?" she asked.

"Now, now!" the professor said, frowning at her. "You really ought to read your papers more thoroughly, my child."

"I've read every 'Help Wanted' for the past three months, ever since we came back," June declared. "And much good it has done me — you and the honey doctor are so

particular!" she added, with a saucy uplifting of her chin.

"It is just because we are particular that I've sent for you this morning," said the professor. "I have been talking about you to Mr. Atterbury, who is an old friend and patient of mine. You are very young for the sort of position he wants to fill, but I told him I would vouch for your sense."

June giggled, and the professor frowned at her very severely. "Mind how you live up to my promises, young woman," he said.

"Is King Cræsus looking for a confidential adviser?" June asked. "Or is he in need of a financial — er — financial assistant? Because if he is, I'm it."

The professor would not smile at her flippancy. "He is looking for a respectable young woman who knows how to hold her tongue," he said flatly.

"Gracious!" said June demurely. "How did that ever make you think of me?"

Her old friend looked at her sternly, al-

though the corners of his mouth were twitching. "I realize my mistake," he said severely.

Then at once June was all repentance, all seriousness. "Ah, no, please, dear professor," she begged. "I'll be good! I'll — I'll really and truly adopt you, if you'll just go on and tell me about it!"

The end of the matter was that June was to go into the office of the Senior Counsel of the Great Southern Railroad, gradually to learn the details of the office work, and in time, if she could prove her fitness for the position, become the confidential secretary of the great Mr. Atterbury himself. It was the place of all others that June would have chosen for herself if she had had the choice, and she knew that she was as fortunate a girl as could be found. Yet, on the way home, she could not but feel a pang at the thought that she was probably to spend all the rest of her days in an office, however pleasant the office might be, however responsible and interesting the work.

At the supper table she was the quietest one of them all. It was not because she regretted her good fortune, or failed to understand how good it was; but often at the moment of success there comes a vague feeling of regret, or of longing for something which, in one's inmost heart, one wishes to have different.

That night June dreamed of a large old house, with its dingy plastering peeling off, with its blinds in need of paint, with many of its window panes missing. She dreamed of a kind and loving old brown face, bending over her, and saying, "Waken up, ma little honey lamb, Mammy's baby, waken up! Marse Hilary's a-waitin' to take you to de far-away city!" Then, still in her dream, June felt Mammy's arms about her, and heard the voice of Hilary-Hilary calling from Unc' Tribby's wagon, "Come, little June!" And when she awoke, there were tears on her eyelids, and her pillow was wet with them.

CHAPTER XII

MISS LANSING IS LATE

MISS LANSING was late. During the three years that she had been in the office of the Senior Counsel of the Great Southern Railway, she had made herself as nearly indispensable to Mr. Atterbury as it is possible for one person to be to another, in this clamoring world where there are thousands waiting for every vacancy. Were it not for that fact, the office force, to a man, agreed that this would surely be Miss Lansing's last day among them. It was ten by the clock, and "the old man," as they irreverently called Mr. Atterbury when neither he nor Miss Lansing could hear, had been in his office for more than an hour. Every one in the rooms given over to the Law Department knew that this was the day on which the President and the most powerful of the directors, with their Senior Counsel, were to meet the famous mining

engineer who had lately been employed on a most important question connected with the road; it was the day of all others when Miss Lansing should have been there to make things easy for the "old man," and to supply him with the various bits of information at the right moment, which he always counted upon her to do.

Every one in the outer offices seemed to know that great things were in the air that day, that some important policy of the big railroad was to be decided upon behind Mr. Atterbury's door. Even the office boy was not rebuked for watching the clock and ducking his head out of the door to see whether Miss Lansing might be on the next elevator. Yet ten o'clock came, and still Miss Lansing was not to be found. At last young Mr. Atterbury went into his father's room, and came out almost instantly with a serious face.

"Do any of you fellows know where Miss Lansing lives?" he asked. But before even the office boy could reply, the door was

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opened, Miss Lansing came in, nodded lightly and impersonally to them all, quietly took off her hat and coat, opened the big roll-top desk that was hers, gathered up a few papers, and went into the room where the important meeting was beginning. Young Mr. Atterbury looked relieved, and the office boy, again unrebuked, gave vent to a long, low whistle.

June had changed during those three years. She had learned to move quietly, to repress her old impulsiveness; and if she had lost none of her fun and mischief, she had at least learned to cast down her eyes when they were too full of dancing lights. If she still longed to say the quick and saucy word, or the teasing one, she had learned to repress the wish and to remain silent. She was as quiet and dignified a secretary as even the stern Mr. Atterbury could wish; indeed, he thought of her as a model in all ways; but inwardly she was the same bubbling, laughing, dancing June, scarcely changed and very

little subdued since the days when she believed in fairy princes, and knew herself sorely in need of one.

Never before during her three years in the office had June been late. But that morning Pauline Manly had telephoned to Grand-mamma Warburton's cottage, where her sisters and June continued to live after her marriage, that the doctor must see June before she went to work. June knew that this was the most important day she had been obliged to meet in her work, a day when she would need to be alert and thoughtful every minute, ready with word and pen and the quick memory that was her most valuable business attribute; so she hurried to Doctor Manly's house, to be met by Polly with open arms. It was two hours before she could leave, however, for the doctor had received a letter by messenger, early that morning, from his sister in Ferryville: June's Mammy was ill, and could not, the letter said, live many days; she was begging for her

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baby, and would not June come to her at once?

Poor June! Which duty came first? It was hard to decide, when her heart yearned for the dear old woman who had been all but mother to her during her childhood. But when she was calm enough to decide, she knew that she must go to the office for that one day, and then, at all costs, to Virginia. Pauline promised to have everything ready for her by the time her office day should be over, and at last June went, with weary heart, to her difficult day's work.

Just how difficult it was she had told no one; for somewhere, deep in her heart, lay something that kept her silent. Never once during the years of her life with the Percivals, never once since her thirteenth birthday, had she seen Hilary Warburton. He had written to them all occasionally, and had always called her the little girl who owned him; he had befriended her cousins at a time when they sorely needed help; but his business had

carried him to almost every part of the world except back home.

And June knew that to-day she was to see him again, at last; for it was no other than Hilary Warburton who had been employed by the great railroad in the matter that was to be taken up to-day. Why she had not told her cousins that he was to return June could not tell. She knew, of course, that he would not long delay coming to his grandmother's little house, to see them all; yet she had not spoken. It may have been a sort of hurt pride that kept her silent; often, when they had known of his being in the country, they had told Doctor Manly that he surely might have come to see them! But Doctor Manly always made excuses for his friend; and it was evident that this time, when Mr. Warburton could scarcely escape coming to see them, he had not told the doctor that he was coming to the city. June guessed that he wanted to surprise them all.

So on her way to the office she had more

than Mammy's illness to think about; yet once inside Mr. Atterbury's room, everything but work was put out of her thoughts. "The old man" looked up at her with a slight frown as she entered, and went on with his conversation.

"Then I am to understand," he said to the man who, in spite of the passing of nine years, June recognized at once, "that you recommend the road to purchase those two valleys? You are convinced that the coal is there?"

Mr. Warburton nodded. He had not even glanced at the secretary. "I am fully convinced of it. There is coal there, and there is copper there. The lumber is practically untouched, and while the cost of the road through will not pay for itself at once, there can be no manner of doubt that the road will bring about many developments. The country will open up of itself."

"You know that country pretty well, Mr. Warburton?" the President of the road asked.

"I have been through it before," Hilary replied. "The Southeastern had an idea of going through there, eight or ten years ago, but nothing came of it — they built nearer the coast, you remember."

"You have no hesitancy in recommending us to put the road through there, in spite of its being sparsely settled and — dead?"

"I have not," said Hilary. "The country has been, as you say, dead, since the war; but there is water power as well as mineral wealth; and I know of splendid fields all through there that can be made fertile with small expense."

"Well," said the President, "your reports had convinced us, Mr. Warburton, and we only wanted a personal word or two with you. I may say that it only remains now for us to buy up those parts that are most rich in mineral deposits. I presume you can help us there?"

"What can I do for you?" Mr. Warburton asked.

"You have those maps, Mr. Atterbury?"

The lawyer looked toward his secretary. She had been taking the conversation in shorthand, but she always knew when her cue came. She looked up from her little red-lined book, and said, —

“One map is still in the engineer’s office, Mr. Atterbury. The other is at your left hand on the desk — just there!”

“This is the map of Blount County,” said Mr. Atterbury, as he spread it out before him.

The President and the two directors stood up and leaned over the desk so as to see the map; Mr. Warburton, too, bent over it.

“This is not the most important one, though,” he said. “The two valleys you want lie just east of the little village of Ferryville.”

June started. With all her cleverness she had not guessed that it was her valley, her own valley, that was under discussion; yet surely no other lay over the second ridge of mountains from Ferryville!

"Can you get us the other map, Mr. Atterbury?" the President asked.

But Hilary said, "It scarcely matters, I think. The land in the first estate is about thirty-two hundred acres, I believe, and in the second some thirty-eight or thirty-nine hundred acres."

"Forty-one hundred and fifty!" said June. She was so intent upon what they were saying that she was scarcely aware of having spoken. Hilary looked up at her quickly with great surprise. But the other men were accustomed to efficient secretaries who remembered all sorts of details, and only accepted her correction as a matter of course.

"That makes, roughly, some eight thousand acres that you think the road should secure before risking any building through there, then, as I understand it, Mr. Warburton." Hilary nodded, and Mr. Atterbury continued, "You think that we need that land to secure our interests?"

"That's about it," replied Hilary.

"And I think you wrote us that it could be bought for eight or nine dollars an acre?"

"I wrote that the man Hilt, who owns the first lot of land, would sell for that; the road would have to pay considerably more for the second."

"How is that?" the President asked.

"The person who owns it will not be allowed to sell without taking expert advice," he replied.

"How do you know that?" the other asked.

Hilary looked at the President squarely. "Because, Mr. Whitney," he said, "I shall be obliged to tell the owner of that second lot of land that she must do so."

The men stared at him for a moment. Then Mr. Atterbury said sharply, "What's this? What's this, Mr. Warburton?"

June felt her heart beating very fast.

Mr. Warburton straightened his shoulders, as if preparing for battle, before he replied. "Gentlemen," he said, "the reputation for honest dealing that I have earned must an-

swer for me in this case. The facts are unusual; but stated plainly they are these:—

“You sent me into Virginia to report upon certain lands. I examined those lands in every way known to me, and I am willing to stake my professional reputation on the unprejudiced honesty of the report I sent you. But it happens that I know the owner of part of that land, and that she is a child in whom I have an interest. I shall feel it my duty to tell the proper persons merely that expert opinion must be had before any price the road may offer should be accepted for the owner of it. I need scarcely say that I shall in no way advise her guardians or friends. I fully understand that the road owns my opinions and my services in this case. But I shall give that one piece of advice to the proper persons, and I no more know the price they will accept than you do.”

June looked at Hilary, all unperceived, with flushed cheeks; she felt as if her heart's beating must be echoing through the room.

But no one was looking at her. Every one was looking at Hilary Warburton, and June remembered afterwards their various expressions of incredulity, doubt, distrust, and also of belief and admiration.

“Well, upon my word,” one of the directors said, half under his breath, “this is very remarkable!”

Hilary turned to him. “It is,” he said. “I fully realize that it is a remarkable situation.”

Then the President spoke. “Mr. Warburton,” he said, “I wish every one we employ were as honest as yourself. I have every confidence in you, and I am sure these gentlemen will agree with me that you cannot act otherwise than as you say.”

“Oh, certainly,” said one; and another said, “Of course, of course!”

“We all know Mr. Warburton’s integrity,” said Mr. Atterbury, “and there is no more to be said upon that. What price do you think, Mr. Warburton, we should consider, as our highest just one?”

"Well," said Hilary, "I think that, in consideration of the distance of that land from any road, and of its present state, the road should not pay more than forty dollars an acre. There is no possible way of foretelling, you understand, what some other man may advise the owner."

"We do understand that," Mr. Atterbury said. "Can you put us in communication with the owner, as soon as you have given the one piece of advice" (Mr. Atterbury smiled here; he was an able lawyer, and well knew when to appear at his most gracious ease) "that you spoke of?"

But before Hilary could reply, June, on an imperative impulse within her, stood up. Although she had been trained in self-repression for three years, the old June would out at times. And now, although her heart was beating suffocatingly, and something was ringing in her ears, she stood up and looked at Mr. Atterbury, at Hilary, at the President, and finally at Mr. Atterbury again.

❖ MISS LANSING IS LATE ❖

She was trembling, and very pale, but she spoke clearly and distinctly. "There is no need of waiting, Mr. Atterbury," she said. "I am Juliet Lansing. I own the second valley, and I will accept whatever you and Mr. Warburton decide upon as a fair price!"

In a moment Hilary was shaking hands with her, and after their instant of surprise the other men surrounded her and did likewise. Mr. Atterbury beamed all the rest of the day, and somehow the news of her good fortune sped through the office; for even the most staid and serious of business men are not impermeable to romance, and June had made herself popular with them all. Mr. Atterbury took her to luncheon, and when she left, at her usual hour, he shook hands with her before them all. But once in the elevator, poor June's eyes filled with tears: her one thought now was not of her good fortune, but of Mammy calling for her baby, her lamb!

CHAPTER XIII

AT HOME

JUNE had been at Oakwood Manor House for a month, and during that time she had had the joy of seeing Mammy grow stronger each day. But it seemed more than a month since the eventful day on which she had sold her valley.

She had stayed at the office until her usual hour for leaving, on that day now so far left behind; she had stipulated with Mr. Atterbury that the Manor House and its home grounds, and the little piece of land that was farmed by Torm, should not be included in the sale; other details she had left to be decided between the lawyer and her cousin-in-law, Doctor Manly; for it was understood by all that Mr. Warburton could with propriety have no part in the transaction. Hilary had gone to the little cottage in the suburbs immediately on leaving the offices of the rail-

road, and he expected June's return there. But she had gone directly to the station, where Pauline met her with whatever she need carry with her, and before the people at the cottage were sitting down to supper, June was speeding on her way to Virginia, over the same road by which she had left it nine years before.

That night she was far more wakeful than when she first slept on a train. As before, she lay in her berth and watched the dark fields and darker trees whirl past, looked up at the stars, and wondered what was happening in the houses where twinkling lights flickered as the train sped by. But she had far more than that to wonder about now, to marvel over. How greatly had her fortunes changed since that earlier journey! She remembered the little child she was at that time, wearing the quaint little dress of brown plaid silk cut in an antiquated fashion; she recalled her first night of loneliness and homesickness and fright, in the strange city and the strange

house where the other children laughed at her; she remembered Polly's coming into the room and opening the big box that Hilary-Hilary had sent — it seemed so miraculously. Then her thoughts went down the years, through all the strange and sad and happy things that had happened to her; and in the end it came to her how different — so different — she was from that little child, yet that she was, after all, the same June now that she had been then. With tears in her eyes she realized that she still wanted, most of all things in the world, to feel her Mammy's kind old arms about her once more, to hear Unc' Tribby's chuckle, to see Torm and the chillen and her old home.

After she left Washington, the hours seemed interminable. Then the train began to climb in and out and up among her mountains; and then the conductor came for her bag, and at last, at last, June was in Ferryville again. She could scarcely see Torm for the tears in her eyes, but Torm could see his

young mistress, as he had been calling her to the people about the station. He and his brother Steve and his four youngest children were waiting for her on the platform. Torm's grin and Steve's delighted laugh, and the funny bobs of the children, were worth coming all that way to see; but, best of all, their welcome told June at once that Mammy was no worse.

"Nor'm," said Torm, "nor'm, Mammy ain't no wusser; seem like she done pick up soon's ever she knowed you was a-comin', Miss June, honey."

On the long drive to the Manor, June was half-wild with delight; nothing seemed changed, and she remembered every turn of the road, every field, every hilltop. She had left winter behind her, but here spring was already tinting the woods with a delicate, mist-like green. Even the stately oaks had put forth velvety pink leaf buds to welcome her; it seemed like the visible promise of a new life.

When they turned into the road leading to the Manor, she was surprised to see that new gateposts had been set up in place of the old broken ones that used to lie half across the road in the old days. But she was even more surprised when she came within sight of the house. There was no longer so much as a single pane of broken glass in its broad windows; the shutters were all hung, and the chimneys mended; and to complete its transformation, the house had evidently been painted within a year or two. June fairly gasped in amazement, and Torm grinned and chuckled and nodded at Steve, and refused a word of explanation.

"Pappy done told me ef I told you anythin' about it, Miss June, honey, he'd shore knock ma no-'count haid offen my shoulders!" Torm declared, and the whole wagon load of happy brown people laughed at the joke of it. Stalwart Torm was well over six feet, and Unc' Tribby had always been a very small man, and was now of patriarchal age.



SHE WAS EVEN MORE SURPRISED WHEN SHE CAME
WITHIN SIGHT OF THE HOUSE

Indeed, when June saw him standing waiting for her on the front steps, she thought he must surely have grown smaller since she had last seen him; but it may have been that his dignity had made him seem larger when she herself was small. Unc' Tribby's old face was working and tears were streaming from his eyes; in spite of the cool dampness of the spring afternoon, he was bareheaded, and June saw that his kinky hair had turned perfectly white, and that he no longer wore it in little tight pigtails, but let it stand out in the effect of a rather ragged white halo. But to June's eyes Unc' Tribby was among the beautiful ones of earth.

He led her up to Mammy's room, all the time babbling delightedly. It was at the door of June's old nursery that they stopped, the room where a lonely child had read her fairytales and dreamed of her rescuing prince, and dressed up in faded silks of a bygone fashion, and peopled her little world with creatures as sweet and innocent as herself — the room,

too, where an orphaned baby girl had been rocked to sleep in brown arms so tender that she had scarcely missed father and mother, lulled by Mammy's monotonous crooning of the old cradle-song, —

“Rock-a-bye, doan you cry!
Go to sleep, li'l' ba—by!

“W'en you wake, you shall take
A coach an' fo' li'l' po—nis!

“A black an' a bay, a grizzle an' a gray!
O—o—oh, such pretty li'l' po—o—nies!”

The simple melody came back to June, as it had, times unnumbered, during the years since she had last heard it. Softly she laid her hand on the doorknob, silently opened the door. It was the same dear, shabby, bare old room, with dusky corners and a flickering fire of lightwood knots; and there, near the hearth, sat an old woman with turbaned head, and a large checked apron, and a little gray shawl about her shoulders.

Mammy and her nursling looked into each other's eyes for a moment; then, with a sob

and a rush, June was on her knees, with her head on Mammy's breast. She had planned to take Mammy in her arms, to tell her that now it was Mammy's turn to be taken care of; and here she was, just as it used to be when she had hurt herself, crying like a baby, while Mammy both laughed and cried.

"Lamb! My li'l' lamb! Mammy's own li'l' baby chile! Here I been a-worritin' for fear you'd be so growed up I would n't know you, whiles you was jest my same li'l' lamb all de time! Glory, glory halleluya!"

When June at last was laughing and talking through her tears, and Mammy had declared that she felt well already, because her baby was back, Unc' Tribby, who was bobbing up and down before the fireplace, rubbing his hands and chuckling, said, —

"Baby! Huh! Miss June ain't no baby! Miss June's de spit'n' image o' ol' Miss! You jest take a real good squinch at her! You ain't seen her yit!"

"Now, ain't dat de truf!" said Mammy.

"You jest stand over dar, lamb, whar yo' Mammy's ol' eyes can see you!"

June laughingly obeyed, standing off and turning slowly around while the old woman inspected her.

"Ain't she jest like ol' Miss, de day Mars-ter brung her hyer a blushin' bride?" Unc' Tribby demanded.

"She ain't like nothin' but her Mammy's li'l' lamb growed up," said Mammy. "She's jest like what she al'ays was, de prettiest an' de sparklin'est an' de sweetest li'l' black-eyed, curly-haired chile I ever set my two eyes on!" Mammy declared.

But in spite of her words, June saw a shadow of disappointment on the old woman's face. "Now, what's the matter, Mammy?" she asked. "What's wrong? Am I too tall, or too short, or too plump, or too thin, or what? What's wrong, old dear?"

Then Mammy took the little white hand that was caressing her shoulder, and looked up into her darling's face.

“Lamb,” she asked, “was de Yankees you been livin’ with too po’ to buy you a silk dress fitten fo’ a Lansing?”

In a flash June remembered Mammy’s belief that ladies should wear nothing but silk, and she understood the poor old creature’s distress. Once more she was on her knees, while she explained that she was not poor at all, but quite the contrary. Mammy and Unc’ Tribby were horrified, at first, at the sale of Oakwood; it seemed as dreadful for a Lansing to be without lands as not to wear silk dresses. But June assured them that the Manor House was still to be her own and theirs.

It was several hours before Mammy could let June go downstairs to supper. Torm’s eldest daughter, Rosina, helped Unc’ Tribby serve. It was a very good supper, of hot biscuit and fried chicken, and as she ate June looked about her. It was evident that the faithful old couple had done their best to keep up the furniture in the house, and it was

very much as June remembered it; but here and there were evidences of money having been spent — perhaps only a little, yet even a little made a great show amid so much decay.

“Now, Unc’ Tribby,” said June, when she had finished her supper, “I want you to sit right down in front of me and tell me who has been fixing up this place. Who paid for the new gate posts? Who paid for the paint and the window panes and the new seats in these chairs? Have you and Torm discovered a gold mine?”

Unc’ Tribby chuckled. “Yas, honey, I reckon we has!” he said.

June’s eyes opened wide. “Uncle Tribulation Lansing!” she began severely.

But Unc’ Tribby only chuckled the more. “Yas, Miss, honey, we sure has struck a gold mine, how bein’ it walks along on two laigs jes’ same as you an’ me! Dis yer gold mine come a-tumberlin’ over de mountin nine, ten, year ago, honey, Miss June, an’ it ain’t nuvver forgot we-all from dat day to dis!”

It was several moments before June fairly understood. Then she flushed, and asked, "You don't mean that Mr. Hilary Warburton has paid for all these things, Unc' Tribby?"

"Dat's what he done, honey," replied the old man. "Befo' he left wid you an' Marse Percival, he done tol' Mammy an' me nuvver to worry no mo', dat he reckoned he could send us some money now an' ag'in, an' keep up de taxes fo' you, too, what had n't ben paid not sence ol' Miss up an' died. So Marse Hil'ry has kep' his word, honey, an' Mammy an' me ain't nuvver wanted fo' nothin' but yo' little self, sence dat day."

For a while June could not speak. In her thoughts she had, this long while, been reproaching her first friend for his neglect of her and his cousins during so long a time, only to find that he had been taking care of her old home and the dear old people in it! She scarcely knew whether to be grateful to Hilary, or angry because she had not been told what he was doing!

Finally she asked, "Has he ever been back, Unc' Tribby?"

"He done come back twice, honey," Unc' Tribby replied. "Once was about a year after you-all lef', and once was jes' here a few months ago. He done stayed wid' us a couple o' weeks dat las' time."

Then June was sure that she was angry; it was an unwarrantable intrusion upon her hospitality! To stay two weeks in her own house while she was absent! She would hear nothing more of this visit, although Unc' Tribby, more garrulous than ever, had a great deal to say.

It was a few days later, after she had received several letters from Doctor Manly and Pauline, that she called all of the "family" into the old nursery, where Mammy was growing stronger every day, and told them of the sale of the valley, all but the Manor House and the grounds around it, and Torm's little farm.

"I want you, Torm, to drive me into Fer-

ryville to-morrow morning. I am going to give the farm to you, and have a deed made out by Judge Wright; then, if you ever want to sell it, you will be quite a rich man!"

Unc' Tribby disapproved of the whole proceeding. To his way of thinking the "quality" must own land or no longer be ranked as "quality"; he grieved for June that she could prefer wealth, which all the Lansings had got on without very well until now, to the acres that her forefathers had hunted over or farmed. But Torm, being of a younger and more progressive generation, grinned with joy all the way to Ferryville and back. To celebrate the day on which he became a landowner, he begged Miss June to wait in Ferryville long enough for him to buy a tall silk hat, which he wore home, putting his usual broad-brimmed straw headgear under the seat of the wagon.

"Us Lansings always did have taste in dress, Miss June, honey," he said, in explanation. "I reckon I knows what kin' o'

clo'es I oughter wear, now dat I owns part of de plantation!"

So June's first month passed happily, and on the day that she and Rosina helped Mammy out to a big rocker on the porch, she sat on the step with her arm on Mammy's lap, and laid plans for the future.

"I want to put the dear old house in thorough repair, Mammy," she said, "and then I shall spend every summer here with you, and maybe come down for Christmas, too, if I can persuade the others to come with me. Oh, it would be such fun to have a big tree in the hall, just the way you say my father and Great-Aunt Lucille Mary used to have!"

Mammy laid her hand on her darling's black hair; she loved to wind the little curly wisps about her fingers, as she had done, when June was a baby, when she dressed her for the afternoon. "Seem like some o' dem fairies you used to read about done took a-holt o' your fortune, my lamb," she said. "I cain't scurcely b'lieve you got de money to do

all dat with! Seem like it's too good to 'a' happened to we-all!"

"Yes, it does seem unreal," June said, in a low tone. "It does not seem possible that I shall not have to go to work to-morrow or the next day, or the day after that!"

Mammy could never bear to hear that part of June's experiences. "My little baby, my lamb," she said, "yo' Mammy'd 'a' laid down her life ef she could 'a' kep' you from havin' to work!"

June jumped up from the step and knelt beside the old woman, putting her arms about her neck. "Oh, Mammy darling," she cried, "don't say that! Why, my having to work has been the very best thing in all the whole round world for me! Mammy, I would not give up that part of it, if I could go back and live it all over again! No, indeed!"

"Why not, honey child?" Mammy asked.

"Oh, Mammy dear, I think sometimes it takes work, and sorrow, and care, to help us to find ourselves! I don't think I'd ever

really have grown up if I had not had those! And I was glad to work, too, because it helped Maysie and Anne and Polly and Gene. They are all such dear old darlings, Mammy!"

So they talked on about the Percivals, and planned for their coming to the Manor when the old house should be in order. And after a while, when it grew too cool for Mammy's old joints and June and Rosina had helped her in, June set out to walk towards the Ferryville road, to meet Torm's son, Frank, who rode in each day for mail. At the gate of the long avenue of trees that led to her house she sat down on a bank and waited, half-dreaming, half-planning, and wholly happy, leaning back and looking up into the old oaks that had shaded the path of so many generations of Lansings, back through their arching branches to the fine old Manor House which she would so soon have restored to all its splendors. She sat there dreaming until she heard steps on the road. Then she arose to meet Frank; but, instead, she faced a

tall, strong figure, whom she recognized at once.

She waited for him with her hands clasped over her heart in the old gesture, and Hilary came up smiling fondly, teasingly, as he used to do when they talked about fairy princes.

He paused in front of her for a moment before either remembered to speak. Then he said, as if to the little girl of nine years before, —

“The Lady of the Manor ran away home without her talisman! I believe it is the proper thing for the prince to return it to her?”

June would not smile, although her lips were twitching. She was reminding herself as hard as she could that she meant to be very angry with him for having taken liberties with her house and her Unc’ Tribby and her own Mammy. So she looked back at him as seriously as she could.

“I don’t know what you mean by her talisman,” she said, “but I know there is n’t any prince!”

“Is n’t there?” Hilary asked coolly. He took a small box from his pocket, and held it towards June. “Then, who do you suppose it is who has had this for nearly three years, waiting until he could bring it back to a little girl who owns him?”

June flushed, and to hide her unexpected embarrassment, took the little box and opened it. On a soft bed of cotton lay her mother’s emerald cross and its necklace of little pearls, just as when she sold it, three years before. She looked at the name on the box, and recognized it as that of the firm which had bought her jewels; then she looked up at Hilary with wonder and questioning in her eyes.

He answered her unspoken question. “Manly wrote me about it, and bought it back for me,” he said. Then he added, “Is n’t there a prince, June?”

But June could only say, “Oh, Hilary-Hilary!”

“Is n’t there?” he persisted.

❖ AT HOME ❖

She looked off to the mountains where she had, once upon a time, lost her little green parasol and gone back to find it.

“Is n’t there a prince, June?” asked Hilary-Hilary once more.

June’s gaze returned from the mountain; she looked at Hilary searchingly, almost pit-eously, as a little child looks who does not quite know its way.

“Perhaps there will be — some day,” she whispered, and turned and ran swiftly back to the house.

But Hilary-Hilary, as he followed her, smiled to himself as if satisfied.

THE END

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